

THE PLAIN DEALER

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The plain dealer

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Newspaper History

THE SUNPAPERS OF BALTIMORE

(1837-1937)

*by Gerald W. Johnson, Frank R. Kent,
H. L. Mencken, and Hamilton Owens*

NEWSPAPER DAYS

(1899-1906)

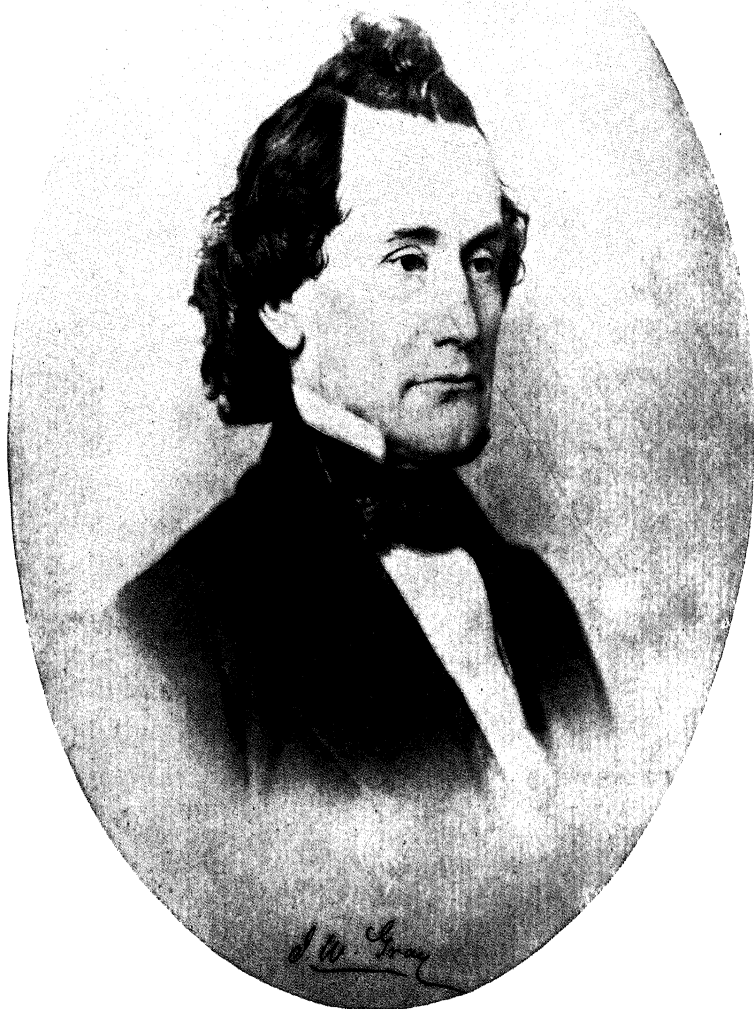
by H. L. Mencken

SOME NEWSPAPERS AND NEWSPAPERMEN

by Oswald Garrison Villard

*These are BORZOI BOOKS, published by
Alfred A. Knopf*

THE PLAIN DEALER



JOSEPH WILLIAM GRAY
Founder

1842 50 1942

THE
PLAIN DEALER
ONE HUNDRED YEARS
IN CLEVELAND

B Y
ARCHER H. SHAW



Alfred A. Knopf : New York

1 9 4 2

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Published simultaneously in Canada by The Ryerson Press

Dedicated

TO THE HUNDREDS OF MEN AND WOMEN
WHO HAVE MADE *THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER*

FOREWORD

THE *Cleveland Plain Dealer* will be one hundred years old on January 7, 1942.

It has seemed to the publishers only right and proper to make the birthday an occasion for rendering some public account of their stewardship, as much on behalf of the great and honorable company of gentlemen now gone to their rewards, who labored incessantly in this vineyard, as by way of apologia for those who still carry on. But a larger reason for telling this newspaper story is the fact that the future always depends upon the past, and out of this rich past we take hope for a still worthier future.

The *Plain Dealer* has been singularly fortunate in having had on its staff an able, modest, and scholarly associate editor, Archer H. Shaw,¹ for thirty-odd years its chief editorial writer, who set himself long ago to make a study of the paper's history. For many years he envisioned as the crowning labor of his life the compilation of this narrative, which he has now completed.

If the reader detects in the book any trace of partisanship in favor of the *Plain Dealer*, it grows out of the author's great love and fierce jealousy for the good name of the institution which has been his life.

¹ Mr. Shaw was born in North Ridgeville, Ohio, of pioneer Western Reserve stock. After being graduated from Oberlin College he entered immediately upon his lifelong career of journalism. For several years he served as a reporter on the Springfield, Massachusetts, *Republican*, returning to his native Ohio in 1902, when he joined the staff of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. During the ensuing forty years he has held many positions on the *Plain Dealer*, but for the last thirty-two years he has been its chief editorial writer. In 1923 Mr. Shaw was given an honorary degree by his alma mater. To the great regret of his associates, he has announced that, with the completion of this book, he desires to retire from active newspaper work.

Of the future no man can tell, but if one were permitted to dream a dream, it would be to the effect that —

Newspapers, like persons, differ as to character, motive, and temperament. The sum of all these qualities makes up a newspaper's individuality. We have all met men who bustle about the world proclaiming their own omniscience. They would tell us, if we let them, the answers to everything under the sun. From such, good Lord, deliver us. They are tiresome.

And also there are individuals who have no opinions at all. These are a waste of time.

We are devoutly thankful for the existence of the occasional seemingly person who gladly allows others to exploit the fashionable hysterias of the day, who often keeps his own counsel, but who is listened to when he speaks.

May the *Plain Dealer* always emulate such a character as the last and may it never forget the principle on which its later career was built, to tell the news honestly and to restrict its opinions to the editorial page and the columnists.

It grows ever more important that newspapers cultivate a sort of good manners because the American people, who guaranteed the freedom of the press, can take it away. This has been done over much of the earth's surface. We shall enjoy the privilege of a free press as long as we do not abuse it. We daily pray for wisdom in this regard.

We are sensible of the kindness with which the people of the Western Reserve have viewed the endeavors of the *Plain Dealer* for the past century. No newspaper in the world has enjoyed a finer, fairer, more progressive audience than ours. Without it J. W. Gray, W. W. Armstrong, L. E. Holden, and E. H. Baker, the big four of the *Plain Dealer's* past, would have withered and died away. With it and with the favor of Providence, we shall advance confidently into the unknown future.

PAUL BELLAMY

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P A R T I

The Gray Regime (1842–1862)

CHAPTER I

CLEVELAND IN 1842

Streets were unpaved, muddy, and unlighted. There were no sewers; no garbage collection. The Square was fenced to keep out predatory livestock.

SUPERIOR STREET, sometimes called the widest city thoroughfare in America, was a dust bowl in summer and a mudhole after a rain. The Public Square, lined for the most part with modest private dwellings, consisted of four smaller squares, each enclosed with a fence in order to "prevent the depredations of cattle and swine." Pigs rooted contentedly at the roadsides. Great canvas-covered freight wagons lumbered through the streets, drawn by two- or three-horse teams straining at their loads.

Thus to a casual observer appeared the heart of Cleveland in 1842. It had been forty-six years since Moses Cleaveland staked out the town at the mouth of the Cuyahoga and gave it his name. In 1814 the town had become a village. It had been a city, albeit a rather unpretentious one, since 1836.

There were to be no waterworks for another dozen years; wells, springs, and cisterns, scattered through the community, were still considered adequate. There was, of course, no sewer system; many years later a mayor was to complain to the city council that the Cuyahoga was an open drain, threatening the health of the people. Garbage found a resting place on the family ash heap or some common dump.

This may not be a flattering picture of a city which was to become in after years one of the most beautiful in America. It was not greatly different, however, from that of hundreds of other communities of like size and general character at this period in history.¹

The first effort to pull Cleveland streets out of the mud was made in 1842 when part of Superior Street was planked. But as late as 1857 an editorial protest was made against the "droves of cattle which grazed on the Square."² That same year an ordinance was offered in the council "to restrain the people's cows from running at large in the parks and front yards of the city," but was defeated by votes from outlying wards.³

Such being the general condition of affairs, it was perhaps not surprising that the Cleveland town fathers had chosen to fence the separate sections of the Public Square in order to keep wandering livestock out and let the people enjoy whatever attractions it offered.

But if Cleveland was still a bit squalid in outward appearance, it had a brave heart and undaunted optimism. It was a serious-minded, law-respecting, even churchly community. Long before 1842 it had become evident that Moses Cleveland's prophecy would come true and be exceeded; that the town he had founded on the Cuyahoga would some day become as populous as old Windham in Connecticut. By 1840, the federal census showed, Cleveland had a population of 6,071, with another 1,577 across the river in Ohio City, ready to be taken in when the time seemed propitious to both communities. Cleveland men thus believed themselves justified in the confidence that they were helping to build a community which would some day rank among the important cities of the world.

It was by no means an unknown region to which Cleveland

¹ Compare Albert J. Beveridge's description of Springfield, Illinois, to which Abraham Lincoln returned after his one term in Congress.

² *Plain Dealer*, July 8, 1842.

³ *Plain Dealer*, July 22.

had led his surveying crew. Indeed, the mouth of the Cuyahoga River had attracted conspicuous attention years before the Revolutionary War.⁴

As early as 1765 Benjamin Franklin, studying the poor maps then available, pointed to this river as an advantageous location for a military post. George Washington recognized the practicability of a water route from Lake Erie by way of the Cuyahoga, the Tuscarawas and the Muskingum Rivers to the Ohio, thence upstream to the mountains, and by portage to some stream emptying into the Atlantic.

An even more significant recommendation of the region was given by the Reverend John Heckewelder, a Moravian missionary, who visited the mouth of the Cuyahoga ten years before the advent of the Connecticut surveyors, mapped and described its advantages as a place of permanent residence. One of the advantages of the place, he saw, lay in the fact that the delicious Lake Erie whitefish came to the mouth of the river to spawn, thus furnishing a valuable source of food.⁵

This place, he wrote, would some day become one of "great importance." The crookedness of the river, which later generations of Clevelanders would spend millions of dollars and gallons of printer's ink to alleviate, were to the early commentators a point of advantage, since it afforded a maximum of dockage space. The six-hundred-foot ore-carriers of the future had no place in the missionary's crystal-reading.

Thus when Cleaveland and his group arrived at the site of the future Buckeye metropolis, having stopped en route at Buffalo to buy off Indian claims to land east of the Cuyahoga, the location had already been amply approved as one logically entitled to a future.

In 1842 Cleveland was midway in time between the open-

⁴ The Cuyahoga was for many years part of the boundary line separating the territory of the Six Nations from that of the Wyandot Confederacy.

⁵ Persons familiar with the condition of the lower Cuyahoga in these later years will commend the fish for abandoning this habit.

ing of the Ohio Canal and the coming of the first railroad, both of them to be remembered in later years as tremendous influences in the development of the city. By now the city had outstripped its earliest rivals and survived one major panic. When Cuyahoga was laid out as a county in 1807, Cleveland and Newburg disputed for the honor of being made the county seat. Newburg had been the larger community and, because of the malaria which plagued its neighbor at the mouth of the river, was drawing away some of the latter's population. But by 1840 the city on the Cuyahoga had outdistanced its competitor. The wisdom of choosing Cleveland rather than Newburg as the county seat had been amply justified. All but the memory of their rivalry was entombed in 1873, when Newburg sought annexation and became an integral part of the larger municipality.

The panic of 1837, precipitated by Andrew Jackson's "specie circular," had hit the year-old city a terrific blow. Nearly every business establishment in the Western Reserve felt the impact, and many succumbed. Values crumbled and personal fortunes vanished in the night. It was, as one local historian described it, "a period of purging and of sobering." By 1842, however, the purging had been done, and the sobering was completed. The little city looked ahead.

Ten years before the panic the Ohio Canal had been completed between Cleveland and Akron, and on Independence Day 1827 the luxurious mule-drawn packet *State of Ohio* stepped gingerly down the forty-one locks between Akron and the lake and headed straight into a great community celebration. Governor Trimble and a group of state officials were aboard the packet and participated in such a civic jubilation as every pioneer town loved to stage. Not until 1834 was the canal completed through to the river at Portsmouth.

What this new artery meant to the infant Cleveland is a story often told. The city's conspicuous growth from 1830 to 1850

was due in large measure to the exchange of commerce made possible by this waterway.

Transportation costs had been all but prohibitive. Prior to the building of the canal it cost \$5 to convey a barrel of flour 150 miles. The charge was \$3 for carrying a cord of wood 20 miles. Before the canals were built wheat was selling in the interior of Ohio for 20 to 30 cents a bushel. After their completion it brought from 50 to 75 cents.

Cleveland was, of course, the most important point on the canal to Portsmouth. Hither came the diverse products from down state. The city became a place of exchange for goods, as well as an exporting point for such articles of commerce as originated in this section. In the year 1842 there were shipped out of here by canal 10,019,803 pounds of merchandise, salt and furniture long being principal articles of export. The canal brought prosperity to communities along its entire route, and Cleveland, being the biggest of them and at the head of navigation, shared generously in their good fortune.

Voices of protest were heard in Cleveland as elsewhere when railroads were first projected. Three miles an hour on the canal and whatever speed of transit the varying condition of the land routes allowed seemed good enough to many who had seen the building of the waterway and its mounting importance to the state. One could travel by water the 309 miles to Portsmouth on the Ohio River in 80 hours. By stagecoach to Wells-ville and thence by boat to Pittsburgh was a trip requiring only 30 hours. What more could any community ask?

The majority, however, doubtless foresaw the great advantage rails would bring to the city. Generous loans were voted to aid in bringing their lines to the Cuyahoga. Not long delayed was a recognition of the fact that the advent of the locomotive ranked with the arrival of Governor Trimble by packet as an event of major importance to the town. Cleveland had planted in this Connecticut of the West. But in 1842 this was all in the

future. The coming railway center here could not be foreseen.

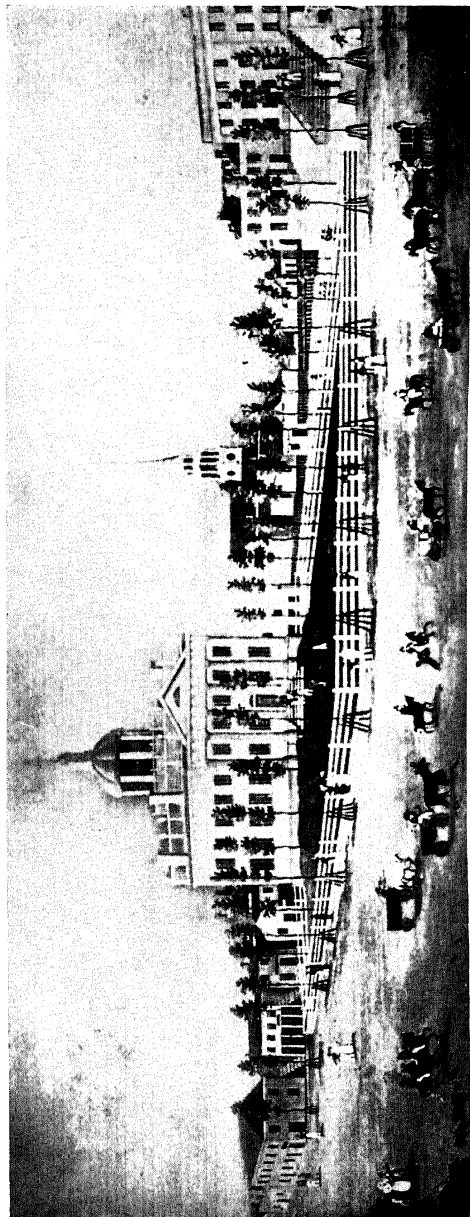
Cleveland saw its first railroad train in 1849. Not till February 1851 was a rail line opened all the way to Columbus. Another Governor, surrounded by state officials, came this time to help the city celebrate another great achievement. He was Reuben Wood, Cuyahoga County Democrat and a man who in the following year came within one step of the presidency of the United States. The city's second railroad was the Cleveland & Pittsburgh, which began operations in the following year.

Caleb Atwater, author of the first comprehensive history of Ohio, declared that Cleveland had "gained its position (of great prominence) from its natural advantages and from its intelligent, active, wealthy and enterprising population."

The first of these natural advantages was its position on deep water at the mouth of a river navigable if at times boisterous and irresponsible. At about the time the canals were getting their stride as contributors to the commerce of the city, steam was displacing sails in the harbor. By 1834 the *Herald* was saying that often as many as fourteen steamboats arrived within forty-eight hours, all of them crowded with passengers. Though sails were to be an important part of the lake fleets for many years, their days of glory were already passing.

The center of life in 1842, as it has been ever since, was the old Public Square, which had been laid out in the original plats of the city. Though these early maps do not indicate an intention to project Superior and Ontario Streets through the Square, they have always gone through, except for the decade between 1857 and 1867. In 1828 the county had built its second Court-house in the southwest quarter of the Square, a solid brick structure with an Ionic belfry and dome. Around the corner on Champlain Street was the county jail of stone, with its three cells.

By 1837 æsthetic Clevelanders had grown weary of the unkempt appearance of the Square. The council had it roughly



THE CLEVELAND PUBLIC SQUARE, 1842

This is the way the heart of the city looked when the Plain Dealer was born.



CUYAHOGA RIVER IN 1842

This is the way Cleveland's future great industrial area looked when the Plain Dealer came into existence. Compare this with the picture facing page 346.

graded and the two north sections fenced. Two years later the council ordered the two southern sections also fenced, "as soon as the county commissioners whitewash the court house." The commissioners whitewashed, and the council fenced!

The ten-acre Square now had four separate sections, each neatly fenced, with Superior and Ontario Streets crossing in the center. This was the appearance of the Public Square in 1842. Fifteen years later the streets across the Square were closed and the four small parks became one large one, as had been repeatedly advocated by the *Plain Dealer*.⁶ In 1867, however, convenience of travel overcame æsthetic compunctions, a court declared the closing of the streets ten years earlier had been illegal, and down came all the fences. A contributing factor in the decision was said to be the embarrassing discovery that any opening in the fence small enough to bar marauding cattle was too small to permit the entrance of women wearing the then fashionable hoop skirts.⁷ It would not do to keep the women out of the park. An edict of fashion let down the bars.

The village of Cleveland, chartered by the legislature eighteen years after Cleaveland had driven its first stakes, was as modest geographically as it was in most other respects. Its territory ran easterly from the river to Erie Street (now East 9th) and from the lake to Huron Street (now Huron Road). Two years later the president and trustees of the village laid out a few additional streets and extended the municipal boundaries.

But, speaking generally, the city of 1842 comprised no more than would now be described as the "lower downtown." Business was confined to the area west of the Square. Except for the Old Stone Church, occupying its present site though with a different building, and the Cleveland House on the site of the present Hotel Cleveland, private homes for the most part surrounded the Square. On a portion of the land now covered

⁶ June 15, 1852.

⁷ *Herald*, March 22, 1865.

by the Federal Building stood the one-story office building housing the famous Ark, a literary and scientific group which contributed greatly to the intellectual standards of the early city. Residence districts stretched away to the south and east.

Stagecoaches ran daily, starting and stopping at the Franklin Hotel on lower Superior. Pittsburgh, Columbus, Cincinnati, Detroit, and Buffalo could be reached over roads of a kind then to be found in every frontier region in America. One of the first stage lines out of Cleveland ran to Painesville, and in 1818 the advertisements pointed out that one could leave the city any afternoon at four and reach the end of his thirty-mile trip at ten the next morning. Plank roads, with their toll gates, were not to come till 1849.

Cleveland was a community of newspapers, and the people had a frontier town's interest in what was going on in a world immeasurably farther away in those days of slow communications than it seems to the present generation.

They were interested and probably duly indignant in 1842 over the policies of John Tyler, the Virginian who had become the country's first accidental President on the death of Ohio's own William Henry Harrison in the preceding year. Whigs being in the majority, they were better pleased with Governor Thomas Corwin, but again chagrined when the Democrat Wilson Shannon defeated Corwin at the polls in October of this year. They were familiar with Daniel Webster's negotiation of the Ashburton Treaty, which settled the boundary line between Maine and the British territory to the north and was ratified in 1842. They read, doubtless with some horror, being law-abiding folk themselves, of the Dorr Rebellion in Rhode Island, which occurred this same year; and they may have seen mention in the public prints of the advent of Tom Thumb, a new attraction at Barnum's in New York.

Early Cleveland has been often described as a bit of New England transplanted beyond the mountains. In 1842 its community life was still controlled largely by the same elements

which had composed the original amalgam. Forty-six years had passed since Moses Cleaveland, the Connecticut militiaman, had come and gone, but the general character of the community had changed but little.

A condition assigned to the people of New England by Allen Johnson, the historian, may be said to apply also to those of Cleveland and of much of the Western Reserve. They possessed, writes Johnson, a "greater degree of social solidarity than any other section of the Union. Descended from English stock, imbued with common religious and political traditions . . . they cherished, as Jefferson expressed it, a sort of family pride which existed nowhere else between the people of the different states."

So marked, indeed, was the sympathy between the old New England and this Ohio section of it that some of the early Cleveland papers regularly printed marriage and death notices from those states, as containing news of local interest.

The men and women of Cleveland in 1842 had "family pride" as well as community pride, and a great fund of self-confidence. They felt their city was on the way to greatness, and they intended to leave nothing undone to help it achieve what to them was a manifest destiny.

CHAPTER II

THE WEEKLY PLAIN DEALER MAKES ITS APPEARANCE

The Advertiser, started in 1831, was badly run down and for sale. Gray, school teacher and attorney, bought it, in partnership with his brother. The name they chose for the new paper became famous.

INTO this transplanted New England community, clustering about its central square, after the manner of its kind, the weekly *Plain Dealer* made its unassuming entrance on January 7, 1842.

It could not be said that Cleveland needed another newspaper, if population and the number already in existence furnished the basis of judgment. By any modern standard, the city already had enough. In fact, the preceding year, 1841, had been particularly fruitful in the number of new papers started.

Since 1819 the *Herald* had been a regular feature of Cleveland life. It had become the city's first daily in 1835. The daily morning *News* had been started in 1841, but proved to be short-lived. To greet the first issue of the *Plain Dealer*, also, on that January day a century ago, was the *Eagle-Eyed News Catcher*, a daily started the year before which was also to have a short career. It is remembered now chiefly because of its resounding name. The *Morning Mercury* was likewise in the field to resist any aggressiveness the new weekly might show. The *Mercury* was also of the 1841 vintage, but would scarcely live out the year. The *Commercial Intelligencer* was a veteran in compari-

son with some of these competitors. It dated back to 1838 and was a Whig daily devoutly dedicated to the cause of Henry Clay. The *Cleveland Gatherer*, weekly, lived from 1841 to 1843.

It can be imagined with what explosions of pitying scorn the advent of the little weekly *Plain Dealer* was greeted along the local newspaper row of that day. Yet the newcomer was destined to outlive not only all of the skeptical competitors which attended its birth but many other rivals which were to spring into the competition in later years.

There are various ways of computing a newspaper's age, and they have been illustrated in several recent studies of successful American journals. The *Plain Dealer* calls itself one hundred years old in 1942. It might, by another method of reckoning, have claimed this distinction as long ago as 1919. For 1819 was the year of the *Herald's* establishment, and the *Plain Dealer* participated with the *Leader* in buying the *Herald* in 1885. The life of the *Plain Dealer* might, therefore, be considered to have extended back in an unbroken line to the birth of the *Herald*.

By another process of reasoning, the *Plain Dealer* could claim to have finished its first century in 1927, because in 1827 the *Independent News-Letter* was started. And in 1832 that paper was rechristened the *Cleveland Advertiser*. And in 1842 the *Advertiser* became the *Plain Dealer*.

The *Plain Dealer* is more modest in its pretensions. It observes its hundredth birthday not in 1919 or in 1927 but in January 1942 because at that time it completes a full hundred years under the exact name it adopted in the beginning. It was the *Plain Dealer* when its first issue appeared in January 1842. It remains the *Plain Dealer* in January 1942. The centenary is thus of a name as well as of the institution it designates.

The *Independent News-Letter* was printed by David B. McLain, "four doors west of the Franklin House." It was Democratic in politics, passed through various ownerships, and in 1831 became the property of Henry Bolles and Madison Kelley,

who called themselves "job and book printers, bookbinders and book sellers." They at once renamed the paper.

Thus on January 6, 1831 appeared the first issue of the *Cleveland Advertiser*. A weekly at first, it was made a daily five years later. In their salutatory Bolles and Kelley were more frank than many in their position have been. "We do not pretend to our readers," they declared, "that the furtherance of their weal is the sole motive that operates upon us — we claim no exemption from the influence of that stimulus which operates more extensively than any other on the minds and muscles of men — that of gain — but its gratification we shall not ask, unless for a fair equivalent."

The "stimulus," it seems, proved disappointing. At the end of the first year the editor complained that "the publishers have not received that extensive patronage that might be deemed an adequate recompense for their trouble and expenses." The paper changed hands several times, left the daily for the weekly field, gradually veered away from the Whigs in the direction of Jacksonian Democracy, and finally near the beginning of 1841 came into the control of Calvin Hall, who had had experience as a newspaper publisher at Elyria.

But failure continued to dog the footsteps of the *Advertiser*. By the end of 1841 the sheriff had several times camped on the doorstep. The paper needed an "angel," or at least a substantial blood transfusion.

The situation, however it be described, was met by Admiral Nelson and Joseph William Gray, brothers and comparative newcomers to Cleveland. "J. W.," as the younger man preferred to be called, had been a school-teacher and was now an attorney. He was twenty-eight years old and his brother ten years his senior.

The Grays bought what was left of the *Advertiser* at the end of 1841. Under the old name it never appeared again. The next issue of the weekly came out with a new type dress and a new name — the *Plain Dealer* — under the proprietorship of A. N.

and J. W. Gray, on the seventh day of the new year. It was an equal partnership, but, by agreement, the younger brother assumed the editorial direction and the elder the business management of the little venture in journalism.

Custom required a salutatory and a prospectus. Probably little heeded at the time, they make interesting reading after a century:

OUR SALUTATORY

In presenting ourselves before the public as the conductor of a political journal, we make our *bow editorial* with such grace as nature may have scantily endowed us, and upon which chance and fortune may have led us to improve.

The vocation is an arduous one, not confined to the mere drudgery of chronicling events, but requiring us to maintain principles — investigate measures — expose the effects of erroneous public conduct — tear off the veil in which sophistry conceals its object, and assist the cause of truth with every argument that reason can furnish, and every embellishment that fancy can afford. To discharge such high and important duties to the public an editor should have a mind filled with a great variety of human learning and a steady command of all its stores. He should have a head cool, clear and benevolent; a nice sense of justice; an inflexible regard for truth; honesty that no temptation could corrupt; intrepidity that no danger could intimidate; an independence superior to every consideration of interest, enmity or friendship.

This may appear a fancy sketch, but nevertheless it is what we shall aim to be.

Every lawyer cannot be a Blackstone or a Kent, nor every newspaper editor a Bryant or a Bennett; but it is in the power of everyone to be honest and industrious; and the stupid fool who cannot, in this age of *thrilling events* “throw some fire into his writings ought to throw his writings into the fire.”

We see the mountain of difficulty before us, and with undaunted step we attempt its fearful height, hoping ere long to plant our standard upon its summit, and unfurl the banner of victory, inscribed “Application, Industry and Perseverance.”

If ever ambition fired our brain, or quickened our pulsation, it was in this way to beguile brief existence, and render some small service unto our fellow-men. Although our past course of life would indicate

no such intention, having first qualified for a profession and, lastly, studied the law, still from our earliest recollections we have loved and sought the "excitement of composition" and often in dreams and waking hours, when the imagination has been left to its own native freedom, have fancied ourselves seated on the throne editorial; with pen in hand, guided by some mysterious influences, sketching the events of the times, the character of man and the revolution of nations. Time will test the nature of our abilities and from a charitable public we have much to hope.

We shall endeavor to make the PLAIN DEALER what its name imports, the fearless advocate of truth, of liberty in faith, liberty in government, liberty in trade, not forgetting that principle in the philosophy of language which *teaches the relation which words have to things*.

OUR NAME ¹

We offer no apology for changing the name of this paper, but the Scripture command — "Put not new wine into old bottles, lest they break."

This paper is now in the hands of a new editor, with new publishers and proprietors. It is soon to be printed on new type and furnished with new exchanges and correspondents and we hope with new patrons also. This is the "new wine," that would *burst* the old Advertiser and not leave a trace of its well-earned fame.

We think the good taste of our readers will sanction the modest selection we have made. Had we called it the TORPEDO timid ladies never would have touched it. Had we called it the TRUTH TELLER no one would believe a word in it! Had we called it the THUNDER DEALER or LIGHTNING SPITTER it would have blown Uncle Sam's mail bags sky high. But our democracy and modesty suggest the only name that befits the occasion, the PLAIN DEALER.

OUR PAPER

This week we publish our paper, or rather allow it to escape, under peculiar embarrassments. Called from a professional business to take

¹ Winston Churchill, Britain's future Prime Minister and war leader, was one day driving past the *Plain Dealer* Building, in company with L. E. Holden. "Oh, there's the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*," said the Englishman. "I think that by all odds, the *Plain Dealer* has the best newspaper name of any in the world." The future Prime Minister of England was on a lecture tour of American cities.

charge of the editorial department with only three days notice, we have in so short a time hardly got the hang of the office, much less the hang of an editorial pen. We found our exchanges as barren of interest as our head was of thought, and between them both we give our readers what in farmers' language is called a "picked up meal." But bear with us until we get our new type, press, etc. and our exchange list regulated and we will give you as fair a sheet as it is in the power of mechanism to produce, filled with as choice matter as the best exchanges and our poor head can furnish.

In the same issue appeared also the customary outline of policies to be pursued by the new paper, under the caption:

PROSPECTUS

The proprietors of this paper, having purchased of the late publishers of the Cleveland Advertiser their entire interest to that paper, have thought it expedient to discontinue the Advertiser altogether and to issue a new weekly, devoted to Politics, Agriculture, Commerce, the Mechanic Arts, Foreign and Domestic Intelligence.

POLITICS

Under this head we adopt for our motto the sentiments of one

"Whose silvery locks and trembling limbs
No more the tempest braves,"

but whose morning and evening prayer for his country's welfare ascends from the Hermitage. Said he: "It is not in splendid government, supported by powerful monopolies and aristocratic establishments, that the people will find happiness or their liberties protected, but in a plain system devoid of pomp, protecting all and granting favors to none; dispensing its blessings like the dews of Heaven, unseen and unfelt save in the freshness and beauty they contribute to produce."

It will ever be our object to contest, inch by inch, the encroachments of corporate privileges which the cupidity of the rich engenders to the injury of the poor, and show

"How wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land";

to war with every species of legislation that has a tendency to strengthen the natural differences among men, and to show that the spirit of true wisdom in human affairs as well as divine "acts not by PARTIAL but by GENERAL laws."

That now the great desideratum of American legislation is an ad valorem tariff and a revenue reduced to the actual expenditures of government; that in the collection and disbursement of the public monies we see no necessity for its being FINGERED, for any purpose whatever, by the nabobs of England or the scrip nobility of our own land, that the same should be collected in the constitutional coin of the United States and paid out in the same.

THE PLAIN DEALER claims to belong to the great Democratic party of this country; but it will never deserve to be considered a strict party paper in the degrading sense in which that phrase is used.

We claim the right, and shall exercise it, too, on all proper occasions of ABSOLUTE FREEDOM OF DISCUSSION. We hold that there is no subject whatever interdicted from investigation and comment; and that we are under no obligation, political or otherwise, to refrain from a full and candid expression of opinion as to the manifold evils inflicted on our country by any party measure, whether Whig or Loco.

A few years later, in a review of progress, Gray described the condition into which the *Advertiser* had sunk before its sale and disappearance:

When we purchased the old *Advertiser* we found it in a perfectly helpless and prostrate condition. Under the management of Mr. Spencer it had fairly "run itself into the ground." No one patronized it because they wanted to, it contained but little reading and that of a very stale kind, it was miserably printed on poor paper and with worse type, and was in fact a hiss and byword among its professed friends. . . . Of course, a paper without patronage must put its publisher in debt, and this was emphatically the case with the *Advertiser*. It had been redeemed from executions and sheriff sales several times by a few of its friends in this city and was for some years an object of Democratic charity and a laughing stock for Whigs. We state these facts as a matter of history known to everyone at the time and for the purpose of having them fresh in memory at this particular time. . . .

No feature of the infant *Plain Dealer* excited more conjecture than did its choice of name.² The editor's own declaration on the subject was not so much an explanation as an invitation to further wonderment.

"Plaindealing" and "plaindealer," as common English words, have always been more familiarly employed in the British Isles than in America. Shakespeare made use of them repeatedly. The dramatist William Wycherley wrote a play called *The Plain Dealer* which, produced probably in 1674 and published in 1677, attracted wide attention.

So handy and expressive a title could not long be neglected in other fields. In 1712 a publication named the *Plain Dealer* was started in London, but only a few issues appeared. Boswell, in his great biography of Samuel Johnson, mentions another *Plain Dealer*, an English monthly devoted to "select essays on several curious subjects." The last number appeared in 1725. It had a successor of the same name and similar character, which appeared in 1763, but soon went the way of the rest.

The trail comes nearer as one recalls the establishment in New York in 1836 of a brand-new *Plain Dealer* by William Leggett, who had been one of the editors and a part owner of the New York *Evening Post*. This, too, was a weekly and was dedicated to the advocacy of "equal rights." It was also pro-Jackson, anti-bank and anti-slavery. It proved to be another publication destined to an early grave, but that its teachings made an impression on J. W. Gray there is plenty of evidence in the columns of the newly established Cleveland paper. Leggett died in 1839, and Gray often paid tribute to his qualities as a writer and po-

² Woodrow Wilson used to say he could tell whether a White House visitor came from the vicinity of Cleveland or elsewhere by the way he pronounced the name of the Cleveland paper which supported him throughout his public career. A Clevelander, he observed, pronounced the name as if it were one word and accented the first syllable. A non-Clevelander made two words of it, accenting the first syllable of the second one.

litical thinker.³ This New York *Plain Dealer* had been started the same year that Gray left St. Lawrence County, New York, to begin life in Cleveland.

Thus, doubtless, may be explained Gray's choice of the particular "new bottle" referred to in his 1842 salutatory.

So far as the record shows, the *Plain Dealer* of the Grays was the first general newspaper of this name. Since then the name has been adopted by papers in various parts of the United States and Canada. In some instances the inspiration stems directly and admittedly from the Cleveland paper. Some of these ventures never attained adult life. Some were merged with other publications and thus lost their identity.⁴

Except for its challenging name and its presumption, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* had at the beginning little to distinguish it from other ambitious ventures of the same kind. The Grays had little money. They had been in the city only a short time. There were devoted Democrats in the community, however, who felt the need of a sound party organ and had learned to have confidence in J. W. Gray. His recent presence as a student in the law office of Henry B. Payne, future United States Senator, and Hiram V. Willson, later federal judge in this district, perhaps gave him some standing as a man of reliability. Harvey Rice was another prominent Democrat ready to give the new paper his influential blessing.

The editor's apology for the appearance of his first issue was probably justified. "Called from a professional business to take charge of the editorial department with only three days notice," Gray was at least meticulous enough to delay the hour of publication until the jack-knife artist who had whittled out the heading for the paper could do a better job.

³ April 15, 1845, for instance.

⁴ Some, however, remain to carry the banner of progress. One is the *Wabash* (Indiana) *Plain Dealer*. Another is the *St. Lawrence Plaindealer* at Canton, New York. Others of the family still alive are the *St. James* (Minnesota) *Plaindealer*, *Youngstown* (Alberta) *Plaindealer*, *Souris* (Manitoba) *Plain Dealer*. Quite probably this list is not complete.

The Plain Dealer.

POLITICS, AGRICULTURE, MECHANIC ARTS, FOREIGN & DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE.

CLAYTON & FOWLER, PRINTERS.

CLEVELAND, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 1842.

THREE DOLLARS PER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE.

THE PROTEST.

The following has been received from the Rev. Mr. [Name] of [Location], dated [Date]:

[Text of the protest follows, discussing religious and political matters.]

THE PROTEST.

[Continuation of the protest text, detailing the concerns of the signatories.]

THE PROTEST.

[Continuation of the protest text, further elaborating on the issues at hand.]

THE PROTEST.

[Continuation of the protest text, concluding the statement.]

THE PROTEST.

[Continuation of the protest text, detailing the concerns of the signatories.]

THE PROTEST.

[Continuation of the protest text, further elaborating on the issues at hand.]

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[Continuation of the protest text, concluding the statement.]

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[Continuation of the protest text, concluding the statement.]

THE FIRST PLAIN DEALER

Its date was January 7, 1842. The modest cornerstone of a great enterprise.



ORNATE FIRST-PAGE HEADING

For a time the Plain Dealer abandoned the block type heading familiar to generations of readers, to indulge in extravagances like the above.

EXTRA CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER. EXTRA

BEST-OF-THEIR-TRIAL THREE PAGES CLEVELAND, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 1890. PRICE 10 CENTS

VICTIMS OF SCHOOL FIRE NUMBER 165; STERN HAND TO FALL ON THOSE TO BLAME

HEARTS ARE BROKEN WHEN THE CITY COUNTS ITS DEAD

Yet as Thus the Stricken Parents of Outnumbered Are Admitted to the Temporary Shelters to Seek Their Loved Ones.

First Railway Organization Turns From Call of Industry to the Aid of Those Crying in Their Ruin.

Lines and Men Give Way to Their Emotions as They Pass One After One of the Victims.

Crowd, a Broken Hearted People, a Thicket Here and There Give Way to Sighing That Tragedy Dealt.

JUD PROCEEDS MADE IN IDENTIFICATION

At the Court House, where the bodies of the victims were laid out, a large number of people were gathered, many of whom were relatives of the victims. The judge, in a long and moving address, urged the people to be patient and to wait for the results of the investigation. He also announced that the city would provide temporary shelter for the victims and their families.

STAMPEDO OF THE PUPILS PLAYS INTO DEATH'S HAND

Little One Crowded Into Hall Against Opposed Door and One Victim Saw Himself Struck by the Rushing Crowd.

Fire in the Building Spread With Incredible Rapidity and Many Were Forced to Descend to the Streets.

Two of Teachers Lost Lives in Effort to Save Children, but Others Suffered Also of Little Doubt.

The Building of Turner That Overcrowded Pupils Destroyed Well Ordered Drill and Shelters for Wailing Parents.

SOME FEW GIVE TO SAFETY BY FIRE ESCAPES

The limited and defective fire escape was not a factor in the disaster, but it was a factor in the stampede. The pupils, who were crowded into the hall, were unable to escape through the fire escapes, and many were killed.

TEACHER DIES IN EFFORTS TO SAVE

Charles and Robert Campbell, Master and Miss Campbell, and Miss Campbell, who were in the building at the time of the fire, were killed. The teacher, who was in the building at the time of the fire, was killed.

PUPILS PERSON ON VERGE OF SAFETY

The pupils, who were crowded into the hall, were unable to escape through the fire escapes, and many were killed.

Death Roll of the Disaster

The disaster, which occurred on Monday night, resulted in the death of many people. The death roll is as follows:

- Charles Campbell, Master
- Robert Campbell, Master
- Miss Campbell, Miss Campbell, and Miss Campbell, who were in the building at the time of the fire, were killed.

CLEVELAND'S GREATEST DISASTER

The headline indicates the story. The tragedy was covered by a staff housed in an abandoned livery stable.

With four pages of six columns each, the new-born journal offered about everything except the things a modern newspaper reader would require. Its type was large, open-faced bourgeois, mostly leaded. There was a little brevier and a very little minion, the latter largely for legal advertising. The first page was devoted to miscellany, headed by a "new poem by Mrs. Sigourney."⁵ The second page was devoted in large part to news from the state legislature and concerned canal affairs. Some canal officials, it appears, were due for investigation on charges that they had diverted waterway revenues to personal uses.

On the editorial side, the new weekly urged that the Democrat Wilson Shannon be again chosen governor, having been defeated for re-election in 1840 by the Whig Tom Corwin. This proved to be prophecy as well as advocacy, for in the fall of this year 1842 Shannon in fact defeated Corwin. Other editorial consideration was given to the Locofocos and the Barnburners. Attention was called to the fact that the Abolitionists⁶ had held a state convention at Warren and put Leister King "on the track for governor."

Of the twenty-four columns of this first *Plain Dealer*, only two were given to what could properly be called news, and the latest date any of it bore was December 29. This was a day of wildcat banking and one precious column was devoted to tables showing what the notes of individual banks were worth at the moment. Bank paper from one Ohio city was quoted at sixty per cent discount. Several small-town banks in the state were labeled "broke." One half-column was enough to cover all the commercial transactions of the city. Another half-column was given to activities of the harbor. Lumber was entering the port in great quantities; whisky, wheat, and salt comprised much of the outgoing volume of commerce.

⁵ Mrs. Lydia Huntley Sigourney (1791-1865) lived at Hartford, Connecticut. She wrote much popular verse and was author of many volumes of prose and poetry.

⁶ Otherwise the Liberty Party.

The editor expressed a willingness to accept country produce in payment of subscriptions, but he preferred cash since the money could be turned back into the paper for its improvement.⁷

Such was the first issue of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. Anyone would have been justified in saying that the infant bore no particular promise; that in all probability this would prove to be just another shortlived, profitless adventure in printer's ink.

Such a pessimistic forecast could have been founded only on ignorance of the courage and the driving force of Joseph William Gray.

⁷ The *Independent News-Letter* advertised (November 22, 1829) that it would accept fifty pounds of rags for one year's subscription. At a later date (December 29, 1829) it named fourteen articles of trade which it would take for "sums now due" the paper.

CHAPTER III

JOSEPH WILLIAM GRAY, FOUNDER

*Small of stature, peppery, fearless, an unreconstructed
Democrat to the hour of his death, he went through
life making enemies who loved him.
The other Grays.*

AN UNDERSIZED man, bubbling with energy and enthusiasm, industrious, versatile, a master of wit; daring, original, one who loved to mingle with people in the market places, sarcastic when he thought the occasion warranted; kindly in his personal relations, always loyal to his friends and his principles — such a person was Joseph William Gray, who with Admiral Nelson Gray, an elder brother, brought the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* into existence on that early January day one hundred years ago.

The Grays were Scotch-Irish, which fact, in the case of J. W. at least, explains a good deal. Their first American ancestor was John Gray who migrated to America in 1718 from Londonderry, Ireland. He was one of a party of seven hundred or more who came to Boston, many of them soon settling in Worcester, Massachusetts. Though they came from Ireland, their forebears are believed to have been Scots who fled from Argyleshire in 1606 to escape religious persecution.

This original Gray in America joined the group which came on west to Worcester.¹ John was a man of many sons, and the

¹ Dr. Asa Gray, distinguished American botanist, was a descendant of the family branch which remained at Worcester. His great-great-grand-

seventh of them, James, went to Vermont. There James, following the family pattern, himself became father of seven children. One of the seven was given the name Uel. Uel married Elizabeth Case at Bridport, Vermont, January 28, 1796, and they gave the world ten children.

Among the ten were the three Grays identified with the *Plain Dealer*: two of them as co-founders of the weekly in 1842; one of the two as founder of the daily in 1845 and its head till his death in 1862; and the third — Nicholas A. Gray — as associate editor, business representative, and at various times Washington and Columbus correspondent. Of the three J. W., though the youngest, was undisputed chief.

By the end of the century a son ² and two daughters ³ had been born to Uel and Elizabeth. Not long thereafter the family joined a migration to the west to begin life over again at Madrid, St. Lawrence County, New York. The two daughters were fated to a tragic end. On March 4, 1806 the Gray home caught fire and, while neighbors and friends stood by in frantic helplessness, the girls, one seven and the other six years old, were burned to death.

Another daughter of Uel and Elizabeth was Beulah Gray who married Zina Earl Hepburn at Madrid, August 30, 1829. They became parents of A. Barton Hepburn,⁴ remembered now as Comptroller of the Currency under Benjamin Harrison. He was a banker and millionaire of New York.

The site of the Gray home and of the tragic fire which destroyed it is still called in Madrid "Gray's Hill"; it is

father was the *Plain Dealer* Grays' great-grandfather. Stopping in Cleveland on his way west in 1838, Dr. Gray wrote a friend back east that "the people show some signs of civilization; they eat ice cream which is sold in many places."

² Ransom, born January 1, 1797.

³ Ruth, born March 24, 1799; Lavina, born December 29, 1800.

⁴ Mr. Hepburn built and endowed seven community libraries and gave them to as many towns in St. Lawrence County. One of them is at Madrid, early home of the Grays.

about three quarters of a mile southwest of the center of the village.

St. Lawrence County in its early days was indebted to Vermont for many of its settlers. As this rich land became available through the extinction of Indian claims, its fame spread across Lake Champlain, and "Westward ho!" became a popular cry for men and women weary of wresting sustenance from Vermont's reluctant soil. The so-called "proprietors" of the county were almost exclusively New York City men, including Gouverneur Morris, the Ogdens, and the Clarksons, whose memory is perpetuated in various St. Lawrence County place names.

But while the proprietors were New Yorkers, the actual settlers came in large numbers from Vermont. Their usual route lay across Lake Champlain, through what were then known as the Chateaugay Woods and thence either by Indian trails or by the St. Lawrence River to the promised land. By the latter route, it appears, came the Grays.

These particular immigrants from Bridport, however, proved at first unstable settlers. The Grays remained only a few years at Madrid, then returned to Vermont; whence after a while they came back to the St. Lawrence County village to stay. Of the three *Plain Dealer* Grays, Admiral Nelson was born at Bridport, February 5, 1803, Nicholas A. at Madrid, March 28, 1809, and J. W. at Bridport August 5, 1813.

This section of New York stretching along the St. Lawrence River was particularly open to hostile aggression in the War of 1812. Incursions from Canada gave the inhabitants every reason to know that war was what Sherman would call it many years later.

Many transplanted Vermonters thought it wise under the circumstances to retrace their steps back toward the Green Mountains. The Grays, inspired in part, perhaps, by the tragic burning of their home, joined this counter-migration. But, once the war was over, the fertile acres of the St. Lawrence country beckoned them again. Uel was to die at Madrid in 1823. Eliza-

beth lived until 1838, dying at the home of her son A. N. Gray in Cleveland.

The Grays' second coming to Madrid was in the fall of 1813, when J. W. was three months old. On the father's death, ten years later, the family was broken up. J. W. did farm work and took what schooling was available. Most of the time he made his home in the family of Ashabel Wright, a cousin of Silas Wright, statesman and for many years a Democratic party leader in the state.⁵ The circumstance was to have a bearing on the course of political thinking in the Western Reserve in the years to come.

At Potsdam, nine miles from Madrid, the St. Lawrence Academy had been established in 1816. There for twelve dollars a year in tuition young men could get such education as northern New York then afforded. And there in 1835 we find enrolled among students preparing to teach, Joseph W. Gray and his brother, known to the archives of the academy as Ammi N. Gray but later to be called Nicholas A. or, more commonly, N. A. After a useful career of more than half a century, the academy passed out of existence in 1869, being then absorbed into a state normal school.

There is no evidence that the older brother was graduated from the academy, but J. W. was one of three young men who in 1836 were given diplomas to teach. The citation from the record is that the three, "having, previous to the establishment of the department, completed a part of the studies included in the course, have since completed the whole course and, having been found on due examination before the teachers and trustees duly qualified, have received full diplomas."

This indicates both the purpose these two Grays had in mind in coming to Cleveland, and the training they had to carry out the purpose. They came, of course, to teach school. N. A. had come in 1835 and J. W. one year later, after receiving his di-

⁵ Ashabel Wright was a fourth cousin of Silas. He emigrated from Vermont (probably Weybridge) to Bucks Bridge in 1805.

ploma at Potsdam. A. N. Gray, the other brother, had preceded both of them, arriving in 1833, bent not on teaching, but perhaps on building a few schools, for he was a carpenter, ambitious to become a contractor.

The younger Gray's first teaching job was in the academy on St. Clair Street. He taught also in the old Rockwell School. In 1838 he was conducting classes in a private school at Auburn, Geauga County.⁶

The three brothers together started an academy on Euclid Avenue just west of Erie Street (now East 9th) to prepare young men for college. It proved, however, to be a shortlived venture.

J. W.'s mind was soon turning from school-teaching to law, and he entered as a student the office of Henry B. Payne and Hiram V. Willson, one a future United States Senator and the other a future federal judge, as has been said. That was long before the popularity of law schools or the fixing of any minimum period of study for budding Blackstones. In about one year Gray was duly certified as fitted for the practice of law, and up went his modest shingle.

But if Gray had soon found himself but little interested in teaching, he was now to find himself as little entranced with the law. He practiced a short time in Michigan and then returned to Cleveland. Always politically minded, he found it more to his taste to write partisan articles for the *Cleveland Advertiser* than to sit and wait for clients to discover the existence of this newly licensed attorney and to bring him some business.

The *Advertiser* was then nearing its end, in trouble as usual, and it was not long before the *Advertiser's* alert contributor conceived the idea of becoming its owner. Forming a partnership with his older brother, Admiral Nelson, he consummated the

⁶ A Geauga County historian, years later, discussing the school at Auburn, paid Gray this doubtful compliment: "Martha Stone and Marian Ensign taught with a good deal of credit. J. W. Gray, afterward editor of the Plain Dealer, taught with some credit."

deal for the purchase of the paper. The *Advertiser* disappeared overnight and the *Plain Dealer* sprang from its ashes.

Gray later said that he and his brother had paid \$1,050 for the property acquired. Into the *Plain Dealer's* original equipment went also some of the material of the *Cleveland Whig*, which had recently kept a tryst with the undertaker.

The advent of the weekly *Plain Dealer* — to become a daily in three years — speedily introduced to the people of Cleveland a new species of editor. Gray loved a fight. The situation here invited a continuous one. It would probably have been difficult to find another place at the moment as unpropitious for the establishment of a Democratic newspaper as was Cleveland a hundred years ago. Politically the cards seemed stacked against him. How Gray met the situation and won a measure of success against the odds is part of the story of the *Plain Dealer*.

Never averse to calling himself a politician, Gray found continuing pleasure in party activities. Once, after the election of 1844, which put a Democrat in the White House, Gray saw "the opportunity of moderating the political tone of this paper and making it, what better accords with our tastes and we believe the tastes of our readers generally, a more literary and less political journal."⁷

It seems to have been merely a passing whim, however. Habitually a member of the county central committee, Gray was often its chairman. In these days he might have been called a party boss. In 1851 the *Plain Dealer* announced that anyone attending the state Democratic convention at Columbus could ride on the Cleveland, Columbus & Cincinnati Railroad at three-quarters fare if he presented a certificate from Gray.

Sometimes, in spite of the editor's habitual resilience of spirit, the job palled. Then he went to public confession and laid the case before his readers. "The life of an editor," he confessed, "is, literally speaking, the dragging out of a miserable existence for the benefit of the people." Gray concluded his outline of

⁷ January 22, 1845.

editorial philosophy by reminding his readers that "it is not right to stop your subscription before you have settled for arrears."⁸

At the beginning of 1852 the *Plain Dealer* widened its page from seven to eight columns. Gray says he might be inclined to boast of his paper's progress, except that "it is well-known that modesty is the prevailing characteristic of our disposition."⁹

Suits for libel were a regular portion of an aggressive editor's lot. Gray fought them and extracted amusement from them when he could. He capitalized on them in publicizing his paper. Postmaster Spencer sued for libel, but lost. In 1852 Gray and Harris of the *Herald* were indicted for aiding a lottery promotion, but both indictments were nolleed.

A particular target for *Plain Dealer* gibes was Horace Greeley, whose *New York Tribune* reputedly circulated more copies in the Western Reserve than did the *Plain Dealer* itself. Following two especially sulphuric attacks, Greeley brought suit against Gray in 1857, asking damages "in money only" in the amount of ten thousand dollars.

When notified of the suit, Gray wrote: "Our first impulse was to give a check for the amount but, recovering from our trepidation a little, we recollected that we, like most Democratic printers, had not a single dollar in the bank. . . . How Horace supposed he could ever get so much money as that out of any Democratic editor, especially one publishing a National Democratic paper in the Connecticut Western Reserve, is as much a mystery to us as the Rochester Knockings. . . ."

In the course of a long editorial Gray rehearses the statements on which the libel is based, and continues:

There, reader, is the case before you as it appears on record. TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS in "money only" is wanted to make good the damaged reputation of a political editor. What a tearing big hole in an incredible short space of time our pen did make in the "pheel-

⁸ July 19, 1850.

⁹ January 14, 1852.

inks" of this feathered philosopher. We plead "amazement" and "go to the country" on that issue. That we possess such powers of mischief with our unpracticed, unpretending pen is "amazing" indeed. That Horace Greeley . . . should presume to have Ten Thousand Dollars' worth of character left is still more "amazing." . . .

After a series of answers, demurrers, amended petitions, and continuations the case was finally settled on February 2, 1859, with each side paying its own costs. Instead of the asked-for \$10,000, the cost to Gray was \$3.50!

Greeley's attitude toward Gray was continuously one of rather amused contempt. He was head of a great and influential newspaper with a nation-wide circulation. Gray found delight in ridiculing the "feathered philosopher" and trying to puncture his pompousness. The issue between them continued lively as long as Gray lived.

Greeley had the last laugh on the *Plain Dealer*, however, in 1872, ten years after Gray's death, when the newspaper which had poked endless fun at the *Tribune* man swung into line and supported him for president of the United States. The pull of party regularity was stronger than a personal pique handed down to an editorial successor.

Two great Democrats of national prominence contributed greatly to the molding of J. W. Gray's political thinking. They were Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois and Silas Wright of New York. Gray was a personal friend of each of them. From the fountain of their Democratic faith Gray drank deeply and to it he continued faithful.

A curious parallel exists between the lives of Gray and Douglas. They were born in adjoining Vermont counties within four months of each other; Douglas at Brandon, Rutland County, in April 1813, and Gray at Bridport, Addison County, four months later. Both went to Cleveland, seeking broader horizons, and both studied law there. Douglas arrived in 1833 and entered the law office of Sherlock J. Andrews; Gray arrived three years later and read law in the offices of Payne and Willson.

At this point their physical paths separated, but not their thinking. After three months in Cleveland, Douglas took a canal packet to Portsmouth and pushed on westward; Gray spent the rest of his life there. Douglas pinned his political philosophy to the principle of Popular Sovereignty; Gray advocated the policy in the columns of his paper. Douglas ran for president against Lincoln, and Gray supported him, but after the outbreak of the Rebellion both gave full-hearted support to Lincoln's efforts to suppress it. Finally, Douglas and Gray died, as they had been born, within a year of each other; Douglas in June 1861, and Gray in May 1862.

In the early columns of the *Plain Dealer* appear repeated testimonials to the influence of Silas Wright on J. W. Gray. Wright, though a native of Massachusetts, had been taken to Vermont as an infant and was graduated from Middlebury Academy. One of Gray's famous controversies was with Sam Medary, Ohio state printer and editor of the *Ohio Statesman*, published at Columbus. Before the ink was fairly dry on the first issue of the daily *Plain Dealer*, Medary accused Gray of not being a real Democrat.

Gray answers the charge in an editorial which pays hearty tribute to Silas Wright, then Governor of New York:

We have always prided ourself upon being a "St. Lawrence Democrat" and of the "Silas Wright school." We took our first lessons in Democracy from that distinguished statesman, having from the age of ten (at which time we were left an orphan) been reared in the family of Ashabel Wright, a connection of Silas, and where the latter used often to call to discuss political matters. We listened to the counsels even then, and when we began to assume the stature of a man and to practice upon his precepts we found it an easy matter to make converts to our faith without resorting to abuse. His is no proscriptive creed, but allows every man the privilege of adapting his principles to his conscience, and not compelling him to adapt his conscience to his principles. He denounces no man for an honest difference of opinions but respects and honors that independence of mind which relies upon the powers God has given it to discriminate

between the right and the wrong in human affairs. His is a liberal and a noble creed and he a liberal and noble exemplar of it. . . .

St. Lawrence is the home of Wright and the banner county of the Empire State! Often when a boy have we made the hills and valleys of old St. Lawrence resound with our juvenile shouts of "Jackson and Democracy" and "Wright and Liberty!"

Nurtured in such a school, we feel a confidence that our principles are right and such only as can harmonize, support and strengthen the Democratic party. We live, it is true, in a region where as yet political majorities are against us, yet under the promulgation of such doctrines we have never lost a governor's election by division, nor a presidential vote! This cannot be said in other portions of the state where different counsels prevail. The Democracy of the Reserve are ever united and their progress is onward. . . .

So much for ourselves and our Democracy. We hope never to have occasion to allude to this subject again.¹⁰

Gray was as loyal to his prejudices as he was to his friendships. Except for this fact, Reuben Wood of Ohio instead of Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire would probably have been elected president of the United States in 1852. Wood was then Governor of the state. Gray, Hiram V. Willson, and H. H. Dodge, all of Cleveland, were delegates to the Democratic national convention at Baltimore. Forty-nine ballots were required to nominate a candidate for president. Long before the end it was plain that some "dark horse" must be found, since none of the leaders could win. The name of Wood had been discussed among Ohio Democrats for months. Gray had played a canny game, neither espousing nor opposing Wood. He rebuked the *Herald* for saying that the *Plain Dealer* had nominated the Governor for president, declaring enigmatically that Douglas is the "second, not the first, choice of Ohio Democrats."¹¹ Now

¹⁰ April 21, 1845. Gray got his first news of Wright's death in August 1847, by private letter from a friendly newspaper editor at Buffalo who sent it by boat. For several days thereafter the *Herald* challenged the genuineness of the letter, insisting the *Plain Dealer* had faked the news.

¹¹ November 11, 1851.

at Baltimore Wood was receiving favorable consideration among delegates from many states. He could not win, however, unless his own state supported him.

Cleveland was Wood's home. Wood, like Gray, was a son of Vermont. Thus to the delegates from Cleveland the convention leaders looked for endorsement of the Governor. Gray, the leader, said no. The "dark horse" Pierce was given the nomination, which, in view of Whig disorganization, was seen to be the equivalent of election.

Later Gray explained that his opposition to Wood was based on the fact that the Governor was a "Hunker"; that is, an ultra-conservative Democrat. In New York the "Hunkers" had been responsible for Silas Wright's defeat as a candidate for re-election to the governorship in 1846. Doubtless that helped Gray decide that Wood was not fit for the White House. It may or may not be a related fact that Pierce five months after his election appointed J. W. Gray postmaster of Cleveland.

Occasionally Gray's belligerence led from the verbal to the physical. When it came to fisticuffs, however, the fiery Vermonter was under a handicap. His normal weight was 125. "We make no boast of our physical powers or animal courage," he declared.¹² But realization of this fact never tempered the ferocity of his conduct.

In 1848 the *Herald* accused the *Plain Dealer* of stealing a copy of Polk's message to Congress which the *Plain Dealer* had refused to buy.¹³ In Gray's best manner the *Plain Dealer* made answer. A couple of days later Gray and John Coon, one of the *Herald* editors, met on the street. In a column and a half editorial¹⁴ Gray gave his story of what happened. In a "cowardly and brutal" manner, he says, the *Herald* man assaulted him. Gray declares he was handicapped for the encounter by having both hands in his overcoat pockets and not even looking in

¹² December 18, 1848.

¹³ December 11.

¹⁴ December 18.

Coon's direction when Coon struck him in the face.¹⁵ But the ardor of Gray's spirit is in no measure dampened by his pommeléd countenance. Comparing the *Plain Dealer* to "the stately ox" pestered by "the noisome gadfly," he bids defiance to his enemies:

The True Democrat may *rail*, the Times may *lie* and the Herald *slander*; they may combine, as they often have, to *write us down*; and, failing in that, set their bullies upon us in the street. We care not a farthing for them all. The Plain Dealer will live and prosper, whether its present editor be allowed to or not; and will yet be read by more subscribers *than them all*. It lives for no man's convenience; it will die for no man's pleasure. . . .

Six newspaper editors have at various times been postmaster of Cleveland. J. W. Gray became the third when named by Franklin Pierce in the spring of 1853. When he assumed the office, he turned over the actual conduct of the *Plain Dealer* to others; so far as the editorial management was concerned, "resigning the laboring oar in our old vocation to Mr. [J. B.] Bouton who has been connected with us for some years as an associate editor." But in spite of this delegation of responsibility, Gray kept his hand close to the steering wheel.

There is nothing to indicate that Gray was either any better or any worse as postmaster than his predecessors had been or his successors would be. There was, of course, the usual number of complaints by the other papers of prejudiced handling of the government's business. Gray's loss of the office in 1858 was due solely to politics and bore no relation to his conduct of it.

Three months after losing the postmastership Gray was nominated for Congress in the old 19th district, comprising Cuyahoga, Lake, and Geauga Counties. The convention met at Painesville, September 18, 1858. His Republican opponent was

¹⁵ Coon's own version of the encounter differed from Gray's. In a personal card in the *Herald* on December 20, Coon wrote: "He [Gray] assailed me confessedly without cause and I assailed him confessedly with cause."

Edward Wade of Cleveland, younger brother of the more famous Benjamin F. Wade. Though Gray conducted a vigorous campaign, as campaign vigor was measured in those days, and ran well, Wade defeated him.¹⁶ The nomination had been unanimous. When the other papers implied some irregularity in the convention, Gray was back at them with characteristic energy. Regarding one critic he said: "'Leon,' the lying scurrilous correspondent of the *Leader*, knows no more about Democracy than a horse does about preaching."¹⁷

Gray's creed, aside from its invincible democracy, called for unremitting hard labor to make the *Plain Dealer* a success. One of the many stories related of him by a generation to whom he was still a familiar sight about town tells of his being arrested early one morning by the city marshal for depositing office sweepings in the street. To Gray's protest against the indignity of being marched off to the station house for so slight an offence, the marshal replied: "Gray, you're a big man up in your editorial room, where you have been squibbling about me, but down here emptying dirt in the street you only size up with other people."

The editor was as exacting in regard to his own personal habits as he was regarding other people's public conduct. "We are a teetotaller," he told his readers in one editorial.¹⁸ In another: "There is nothing we detest so much as smoking and chewing, except it be the smokers and chewers themselves."¹⁹ To the latter theme of abstinence from the use of tobacco Gray often reverts, devoting columns in the aggregate to denunciation of a habit then far less common than it was to become later.

Then one day, when Gray was out of town, some subordinate²⁰ played an editorial trick on his absent chief. The nature

¹⁶ Wade polled 8,557 votes to Gray's 4,597 in the district.

¹⁷ September 20.

¹⁸ September 25, 1848.

¹⁹ November 27, 1844.

²⁰ Tradition says the playful editor was William E. McLaren, later a bishop in the Episcopal Church.

of the hoax is indicated by the letter received from an irate subscriber and printed a few days later: ²¹

A LETTER OF PROTEST

Mr. Editor: You have been so daring as to offer an apology for the use of that nasty weed, tobacco. Don't you know you have incurred the displeasure of a host of readers? Don't you know they all think you an ungracious meddler for furnishing arguments to the gentlemen in the quiet way you did? Let me tell you, sir, it is no use, for we have an argument that cannot be answered — we will hoot the gentlemen fragrant with the odors of the cigar and the gentlemen disgusting with the fumes of the “quid,” hoot them from our company! Can you get over this, sir? You make a pretty picture, don't you, if you be as you describe yourself after dinner. You admit you have acted swinish at the table, for you say your “intellectual tendencies are deadened”; you say you are in a state of “semi-consciousness”; then you put a piece of poison, wrapped up and scented, in your mouth and smoke yourself to sleep or some state no better. Now what a nice looking piece of baconizing humanity you are! Pshaw, out upon you! Throw cigars where Shakespeare said to throw physic, though “the dogs” will not touch the finest one you ever smoked. You know men have their little vices and tobacco is one of them. You say the ladies should pass over these little vices unnoticed. That will not be done, sir!

MARIE

But life for Gray was not all fuss and fury. He loved the relaxation of the dance. He enjoyed chess and delighted in adapting its terms and strategy to editorial discussions. Some of the early battles of the Civil War were to him like masterful maneuvers back and forth across the sixty-four squares of the board. The precise symbolism of the following may be difficult now to determine:

On the great military chess board we have made some ill-advised moves, but the old “Rook of Monroe” has “Castled” at Hatteras, and in the several rapid succeeding moves captured two castles, thirty-one pieces and 700 pawns, while Fremont, the knight of St. Louis, from the opposite side of the board will force a move from the

²¹ February 10, 1853.

black bishop (Polk) near him. By an unfortunate move toward Richmond we were unexpectedly "checked" and held to the defensive close in all directions, but the "castling" has relieved us and we now take to the attack. Look out for the white knight before Washington's square! ²²

From grave matters of politics and war Gray could turn lightly to themes of home and fireside. Gray was married on November 11, 1845 to Mary K. Foster, described in another paper as one of Cleveland's "beautiful daughters." Oddly, the *Plain Dealer* made no mention of the nuptials. Gray loved family life and spent all the time he could in his home, which occupied a site on Superior Street where the Colonial Theater would stand years later; a site which has long since come to the useful if undramatic end of being a parking lot. Three children were born to the Grays, one of whom may have inspired this editorial:

Talk about babies! We always loved a baby — not any of your sour, suspicious, squalling specimens — but a bright, rosy, dimpled thing, full of fun and frolic, running over with glee, and of such a confiding, unsuspecting disposition as not to refuse "to go to" anybody. What can be more refreshing in this busy, tiresome world than an occasional romp with a baby? A letting down, as it were, of the chord of mind until it vibrates in unison with a baby's and then holding a confidential chat in real baby vernacular. Then to have a couple of white, chubby arms thrown about your neck and a pair of rosy lips, fresh as rosebuds ere the dew has left them, presented for a kiss! The man who can think of it without a softening of the heart and a watering of the mouth is no better than the swine before whom the pearls are cast, and we hope he may never be blessed with a baby — or if he is, let it be a kicking, pugilistic baby, one skilled in the art of gouging, who takes delight in running his thumb into your eye and in endeavoring to obtain a lock of your hair by a more summary process than clipping. ²³

War, politics, and even babies could not, singly or combined, keep the mind of J. W. Gray from producing a quip when the

²² September 2, 1861.

²³ January 5, 1850.

occasion offered. In the summer of 1849 there was cholera in Cleveland, a brother of one of Gray's associates succumbed to it, and the report was spread that Gray himself was the victim. The incident, amusing to the supposed deceased, invited this comment over Gray's own signature: ²⁴

OUR OBITUARY

We did not expect it would ever become necessary for us to publish our card certifying over our sign manual that *we are alive*; but such seem to be the necessities of the case at present. The people, especially in Lorain County, will have it that *we died of cholera*! Now it is gratifying to us, and we presume to our country friends, that we are able to state most positively that *this cannot be true*. If we might be permitted to argue such a case we would say there are a multitude of facts which, so far as circumstantial evidence is admissible, would go far to throw doubt upon the report. We will mention a few; first, we were never under a doctor's care a day in our life, and everybody knows how difficult it is to die without a doctor; second, we could not well have died of *cholera* as we have been vaccinated for it from our earliest infancy, i.e., we never drink ardent spirits, smoke, chew, snuff or swear; third, had we really died the Herald would have been dressed in BLACK, so tenderly does that sheet regard our *life*.

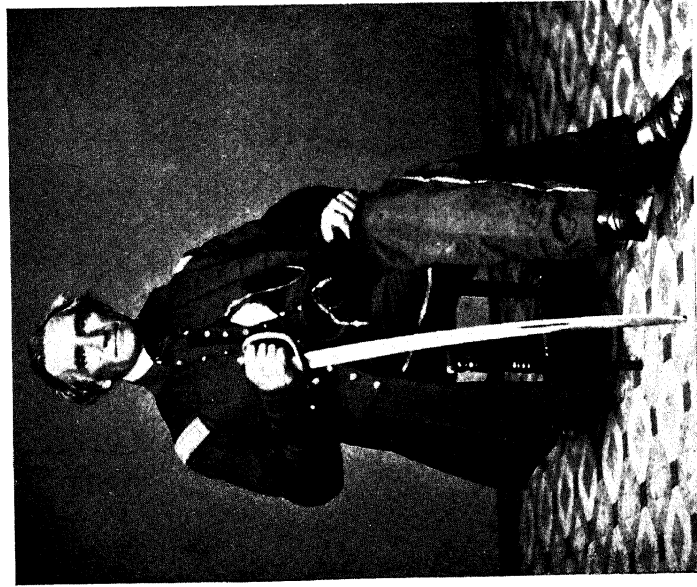
These considerations are conclusive to us that we are still living and if our distant friends want any further evidence let them inclose to us each a *dollar and a half* for our forthcoming *new dressed ENLARGED WEEKLY* and we will send receipts with the genuine *autograph*.

A newspaper at Canton, New York, regrets the fact that winters thereabouts are less snowy than they used to be. It ends the editorial with the exclamation: "O, Mores!"

"When we lived in Old St. Lawrence," Gray observed, "we never had to call on 'Moses' for snow. We have skated many a day on its crust five feet above ground, and fences and stumps all out of sight for miles around." ²⁵

²⁴ June 4, 1849.

²⁵ February 11, 1848.



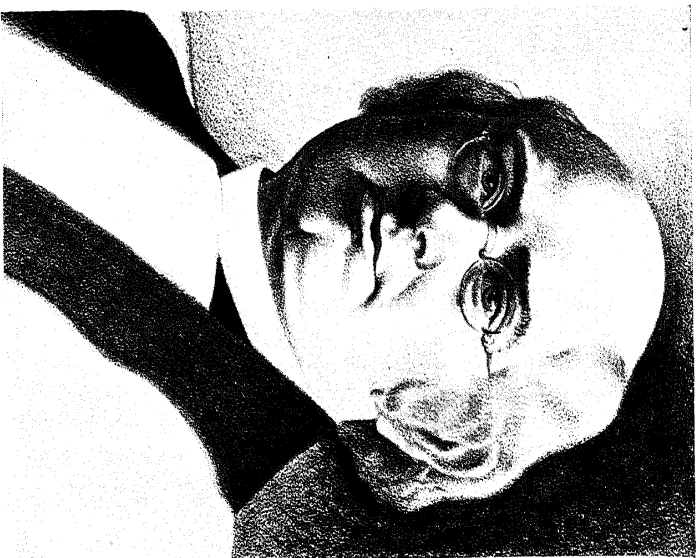
N. A. GRAY

Nicholas A. Gray, after holding many positions on the Plain Dealer, left the Democratic party in the Civil War and thus



BROTHERS OF THE FOUNDER

A. N. GRAY
Admiral Nelson Gray was co-founder of the weekly.



WILLIAM E. McLAREN

He entered the ministry after leaving the Plain Dealer and became a bishop in the Episcopal Church.



JAMES D. CLEVELAND

He succeeded McLaren and preceded Artemus Ward on the staff of the Plain Dealer. He became a distinguished judge and civic figure in the community.

Believing them matters of popular interest, if not of actual importance, the *Plain Dealer* devotes columns to spiritualism and "spirit rappings." The *Herald* suggests that Gray is ready to become a "medium." Gray denies that he has embraced spiritualism, but adds: "We never condemn as a humbug what we cannot demonstrate as falacious; neither do we believe what we cannot understand."²⁶

One day there appeared at the head of the editorial column a new, elaborate, but badly printed design featuring a head of Franklin. The editor hastened to reassure his public:

Shade of Franklin, reader! don't think that is our *head* — we never assumed so much gravity in our life. Besides, we never wear a *wig* nor *spectacles*, although such things become old folks, and it is well known that we are *Gray*.

That is the head of Ben Franklin, the Printer, Patriot and Philosopher. He was a *Plain Dealer* also and as a model for our humble, feeble but honest imitation we select him to preside over our editorial columns.²⁷

But the cut was too bad for acceptance even on so high a ground. It never appeared again.

So ran the daily current of the *Plain Dealer's* editorial life. Never discouraged by defeat or disheartened by political reverses, cheerful in the face of new rivalries set up for his undoing, jubilant in victory and resilient under the blows of misfortune, he sought ever to make his paper a little better than it had been. The latest and best in equipment was bought, whenever he could afford it. The best of talent was sought.

George Hoyt, long an editorial associate of Gray, wrote years later²⁸ that Gray was "almost the father of modern illustrated news journalism. . . . His was the first political newspaper that I know of to make deliberate use of this weapon [caricature] throughout a campaign, as he did in 1860; those things

²⁶ January 29, 1851.

²⁷ September 30, 1858.

²⁸ August 24, 1902.

were left to the regular illustrated papers or the satirical or comic journals of the day." Gray was also the first Cleveland editor to print daily market reports.

He was, indeed, a veritable dynamo of energy. He found time for civic as well as political activities. He served as school examiner and was the first secretary of the Cleveland Lyceum, later serving as its treasurer.

Of the many characterizations of Gray left us by his contemporaries, none perhaps is more to the point than this from the *Buffalo Courier*, a not very friendly paper, as quoted by the *Herald*:

He is smart, lively, litigious as Peter Peebles,²⁹ and as pugnacious as a terrier. He rushes into a controversy, as a bull starts on a career, with his eyes shut, regardless of the size or strength of his antagonist, never knows when he is beaten, or when he has conquered, but continues the fight, whether it be with a windmill, a chimera or a man, until the breath is fairly beaten out of his body. He then desists perforce, but the moment he recovers he begins precisely where he left off and repeats the performance with a similar result.³⁰

Though for the first twenty years of its life the *Plain Dealer* and J. W. Gray were almost synonymous terms in the Western Reserve and wherever the newspaper was read, there were, in truth, three Grays, sons of Uel and Elizabeth, identified with the paper in its early days.³¹

Admiral Nelson Gray — who preferred, after the family fashion, to be called merely A. N. — had preceded his younger brothers to Cleveland from their home in Madrid, New York. He was a copartner with J. W. in establishing the weekly *Plain Dealer*, but did not stay with the new venture long. Following the sale of his interest in the paper to his brother, A. N. Gray became an inspector of flour and other products on the payroll

²⁹ Peter Peebles was a character in Scott's *Redgauntlet*.

³⁰ Quoted in the *Herald*, September 30, 1858.

³¹ A fourth brother, oldest of the four, was Ransom Gray, who went to Cleveland with the rest and was a blacksmith. He died there in 1848.

of the city. He was also a member of the city council. A few years later he established a business furnishing railroads, then rapidly developing in the Reserve, with rails, spikes, and other materials of track construction. Accordingly he was known the rest of his life as "Iron Gray."

A. N., oldest of the three *Plain Dealer* brothers, died in Cleveland on June 22, 1862, less than a month after the death of J. W.³²

N. A. was the middle brother in age. In 1840 he married Ann Mary Lewis, whose mother was a cousin of Dolly Madison. He worked for the *Plain Dealer* in many editorial capacities. He was at various times associate editor, writer of editorials, and for one period acted nominally as editor.

When the daily *Plain Dealer* came into existence in 1845, N. A., who was teaching school at Zanesville, became at once the accredited agent of the new enterprise in that locality. From that time until he enlisted for service in the Civil War he was identified with the paper. When J. W. became postmaster he made N. A. his deputy. N. A. was given credit for persuading David Tod to accept the Union nomination for governor in 1861. In the Tod administration he was clerk of the Ohio Senate.

Because of his activity in church and Sunday school N. A. was popularly known as "Deacon." "How is J. W. and the Deacon?" asked Artemus Ward, writing from his desk in the office of *Vanity Fair*.

To the complete disgust of his Democratic friends on the *Plain Dealer*, N. A. turned Republican after the war. J. W. was then in his grave and thus was spared knowledge of his brother's "infamy." For a Gray of St. Lawrence County, shrine of Silas Wright, to become a Republican would have been gall and wormwood, triple-distilled, to the head of the clan!

³² Two sons of A. N. Gray won distinction in the Civil War. Lieutenant Roman H. Gray was presented a sword by a group of Cleveland friends in the fall of 1862 "for gallant conduct at the Battle of Shiloh." A. P. Gray worked for the *Plain Dealer* before enlisting for service against the Confederacy.

Though over-age, the "deacon" in May 1862 — the month J. W. died — enlisted in the army as a private, and re-enlisted two years later. Following Grant's election to the presidency, he was given a position in the Post Office Department at Washington, remaining on the payroll of the federal government until his death in 1877. Pleasing and effective as a speaker, he several times toured Ohio on behalf of Republican candidates for state office whom the *Plain Dealer* was at the moment trying its hardest to defeat. "A renegade Democrat" was the *Ohio Statesman's* characterization of him, and the *Plain Dealer* found pleasure in reprinting it.³³

Yet at N. A.'s death the *Plain Dealer* generously observed that "the deacon was a quaint character, but his good heart and invariable bonhomie generally made friends of those with whom he came in contact, despite political and other differences. The writer of this ³⁴ will always carry with him pleasant memories of Deacon Gray."

³³ July 17, 1867.

³⁴ Probably George Hoyt.

CHAPTER IV

CHARLES DICKENS COMES TO TOWN

The English novelist, touring America, visits Cleveland and is affronted by an article he credits to the Plain Dealer. It was only a reprint, but it served.

FREE publicity as unusual as it was unexpected came to the weekly *Plain Dealer* in the fourth month of publication. It was a bit of advertising founded in error, but the proprietors of the paper were quick to utilize it to the utmost.

Charles Dickens, one of the great English novelists of all time, made a tour of the United States in the early months of 1842. He had "conquered" England with his inimitable pictures of life in *The Pickwick Papers* and other works of literary genius. He came to this country a man of not quite thirty, and traveled by stagecoach, canal boat, and lake steamers, gathering material which later appeared in his famous *American Notes*.

Crossing Ohio from Cincinnati to Sandusky, Mr. and Mrs. Dickens and their party took the steamer *Constitution* down the lakes, stopping at Cleveland from midnight till nine o'clock in the morning of April 25. The *Herald* that afternoon contained this paragraph of news:

Boz — Mr. Dickens and Lady passed down the lake today on the *Constitution*. While the boat was in port this morning Mr. D. took a stroll about town with a traveling friend, returned to the boat and immediately retired to his stateroom. The gentlemen and loafers

gathered about the dock got a sight at "The Dickens" — and that was all!

The *American Notes* was prepared for publication immediately after Dickens's return to England in June, but it was late in the year before the volume itself was available in Cleveland. The little community was greatly entertained to read these lines from the Englishman's impressions of his American cousins:

After calling at one or two flat places, with low dams stretching out into the lake, whereon were stumpy light-houses, like windmills without sails, the whole looking like a Dutch vignette, we came at midnight to Cleveland, where we lay all night, and until 9 o'clock next morning.

I entertained quite a curiosity in reference to this place, from having seen at Sandusky a specimen of its literature in the shape of a newspaper which was very strong indeed upon the subject of Lord Ashburton's recent arrival at Washington to adjust the points of dispute between the United States government and Great Britain — informing its readers that as America had "whipped" England in her infancy, and whipped her again in her youth, so it was clearly necessary that she must whip her once again in her maturity; and pledging its credit to all True Americans, that if Mr. Webster did his duty in the approaching negotiations, and sent the English Lord home again in double-quick time, they should, within two years, sing "Yankee Doodle in Hyde Park, and Hail Columbia in the scarlet courts of Westminster." I found it a pretty town, and had the satisfaction of beholding the outside of the office of the journal from which I have just quoted. I did not enjoy the delight of seeing the wit who indited the paragraph in question, but I have no doubt he is a prodigious man in his way, and held in high repute by a select circle.

The article Dickens referred to had appeared, as everyone knew, in the recently established *Plain Dealer*. The "wit" and "prodigious man," it was assumed, could be none other than J. W. Gray.

That Dickens's reception in Cleveland and his resentment at the "whip England" article were not conceived of by the novelist as a mere literary device, but had in fact made a deep

impression on him, is indicated by a letter he wrote to his own future biographer John Forster from Niagara the day following his visit at the mouth of the Cuyahoga:

. . . We lay all Sunday night at a town (and a beautiful town, too) called Cleveland; on Lake Erie. The people poured on board in crowds by six Monday morning to see me; and a party of "gentlemen" actually planted themselves before our little cabin, and stared in at the door and windows *while I was washing and Kate lay in bed*. I was so incensed at this, and at a certain newspaper published in that town which I had accidentally seen at Sandusky (advocating war with England . . .) that when the mayor came on board to present himself to me, according to custom, I refused to see him and bade Mr Q tell him why and wherefor. His honor took it very coolly and retired to the top of the wharf, with a big stick and whittling knife, with which he worked so lustily (staring at the closed door of our cabin all the time) that long before the boat left the big stick was no bigger than a cribbage peg.¹

The point of the whole Dickens story lies in the fact — which the distinguished visitor overlooked and reporters of the incident have ignored ever since — that the offending article was, so far as Gray and the *Plain Dealer* were concerned, merely a reprint, clipped, as the office saying is, to "fill a hole." It had appeared originally in the *Index*, a paper published at Alexandria (then included in the District of Columbia), whose editor was Jesse E. Dow. Used as an editorial in the *Index* on March 12, it was reprinted in the *Plain Dealer*, with full credit to its origin and without comment, a month later, twelve days before Dickens took his stroll along the streets of Cleveland.²

¹ The mayor of Cleveland at the time was Dr. Joshua A. Mills, thrice chief executive of the city. On the occasion of his death (May 1, 1843) the *Herald* said of him: "His eminence as a physician, his usefulness as a citizen, his character as a man, have secured to him an enviable reputation, while the frankness, the generosity, the nobleness of his heart, have won the lasting love of all who knew him."

² Even George Hoyt, who worked with Gray for years, wrote in a reminiscent article, August 24, 1902, that Gray was author of the article which so aroused Dickens.

Here is the *Index* pronouncement:

WAR WITH ENGLAND

We must confess we are astonished at the apparent apathy of Congress on the subject of a war with England. . . .

England must conquer the United States, or she must sink into the grave of nations. Statesmen and diplomats may dream of peace, but the enemy's cannon will ere long arouse them with a thunder note, and then a war of extermination will commence in earnest. . . .

We pray not for war if we can have an honorable peace, but we cannot have such. The grasping after the wealth of the world by England has destroyed her earlier sympathies and fired the train of her ambition. A hypocrite in the vesture of the church, she preaches the gospel of the world at one moment and lays the world under contribution at the next by force of arms. A harlot in spotless robes of a vestal, she speaks of purity and virtue and then seduces her hearers with her blandishments and honied tones. She has tyrannized over every power of Europe and Asia. Her fleets have scoured the seas, and her flag floats over every wild crag of the ocean. Despised and feared by all, she sits like a surly mastiff in her island kennel thirsting for blood, yet afraid to leave her litter. Her gold conquered Napoleon — her rapacity has caused nearly every war for the last fifty years. She warred with her own colonies because we would not pay her debts, use her stamped hot pressed paper and drink her infernal tea. She hates France because of her manufactures and curses America for having the manliness to tell her to mind her own business. We are ready to war with England. . . .

Like Sir John Falstaff we can give reasons as plenty as blackberries for a war; and, feeling confident that we must have one, we are desirous of doing the business up handsomely at once, before our ardor cools or our countrymen become callous to insult and invasion.

Our country teems with strong arms and stout hearts, burning for the fight. The war spirit is up among the people. The old drums of Louisburg, Havana, Bunkerhill, Saratoga, York-Town, New Orleans and an hundred other scenes of American glory are waiting for the signal. Our dark old battleships for the "beat to quarters." Then let our reformers, who are now so busy in saving wafers and sealing wax and who sell letter paper in the post office of the House of Representatives at \$8 per ream, be up and doing. Congress of American Republicanism, stand to your arms — war is at hand. In less than fifteen

days it may be upon us in all its horrors. Pass your militia bill; distribute your arms; authorize your President to grant commissions to privateers; call home your Whalemens; increase your navy; send your commercial agents around the world and bid the American hearts come home. Fight England, if fight you must, with a will to make a business of it, and my word for it, in less than three years the old Grid Iron and the stars will float triumphant over the seas. The people demand war! Our country is insulted and her glory is dimmed by the insolence of England. We should act as a man would act who has been insulted upon the walk. Thank God, the old blood of the Revolution is still trickling in our veins. We whipped England when we were in our infancy; we threshed her again when we arrived at the age of manhood; and with the blessing of God we can in a short time sing "Jefferson and Liberty" in Hyde Park and "Hail Columbia" in the scarlet halls of Westminster.

Strange, bombastic jargon this sounds now. But that these ideas had considerable currency a hundred years ago is not to be questioned. That the Grays of the *Plain Dealer* sympathized with them, to some extent at least, need not be doubted. In fact, the *Plain Dealer*, on its own account, had said earlier in this April:

The time is at hand when England,

That power whose flag is now unfurled,

Whose morning drum beats round the world,

will be humbled; and He who guides the destinies of nations will take vengeance on this "Disturber of the peace."³

Had Dickens seized on that stray paragraph of *Plain Dealer* opinion, instead of on the *Index* reprint, he would have had a better case against the paper which had offended him. In those first days of his editorship Gray was a good deal of a jingo.

Again, if Dickens had been more familiar with the *Plain Dealer*, and not a mere "accidental" reader of a stray copy, he might have encountered this paragraph to help feed his wrath:

"Bozophobia" is a new disease which has broken out in the eastern cities. The dandies, dandizettes and fools are running after Boz,

³ April 6, 1842.

alias Charles Dickens. The tickets for a ball recently given him in New York sold for \$5) apiece! ⁴

Late in the year the *American Notes* found its way to Cleveland. The *Plain Dealer* on November 23 reprinted large sections of the new book and made this observation regarding its author and his opinions of America:

His stay in this country was short, his time was mostly spent in barrooms, stage coaches and steamboats; and it is evident from his Notes that he has become acquainted only with such characteristics of our people as float on the surface, and has yet to learn our real characters. However, there is much in this work to amuse and instruct the American readers, although in every page we meet traces of a deep-seated English prejudice.

Not for some weeks, it appears, did Gray come to realize what a chance Dickens had given him for blowing his own journalistic horn. Finally came this editorial:

BOZ IN CLEVELAND

Long will be remembered that bright morning in May [*sic*] when it was announced to the citizens of Cleveland that "the Dickens was among them." . . .

All the dignitaries from the shirtless loafer to his Honor the Mayor met the boat at the foot of Main street, where other famous men had disembarked. . . .

When his "Notes of America" were first published, the *would be great men* of this *little* city ordered ten score copies by Hardin & Co's express to be brought with lightning speed. The books were opened and all of Cleveland that appeared was the following lines, the glory of which we take all to OUR HUMBLE SELF;

[Then are repeated the lines from the *Notes* quoted above.]

That immortalizes us, that word "prodigious"! How slight the foundation often, on which rests the fabrick of human greatness! But for a vagrant copy of the *Plain Dealer* and the careless penning of a paragraph which proved unpalatable to English taste we might have lived and died in comparative obscurity. But the above "note" has made us the subject of comment by all the Lords, Dukes, Marquises and Ministers of England!

⁴ March 16, 1842.

Sluggish the spirit and base the lot of him who is content to plod through a dull life to a fameless grave! ⁵

The Dickens contribution to the *Plain Dealer's* fame was too precious for the editor to forget. In August 1859, hearing that the novelist would make a second tour of the United States, the *Plain Dealer* offered this jocular suggestion:

Come on, "Boz." Bring that book you wrote on your return from this country. We shall expect you to read before a Cleveland audience that thrilling chapter headed "The Cleveland Plain Dealer." When you come to the paragraph copied from the *Plain Dealer* throw your whole soul into it and we will guarantee the house will come down. . . . We put you down as a "dead head" subscriber to the *Plain Dealer* during your stay. . . .⁶

Many years later, nearly twenty after the death of J. W. Gray, the *Cleveland Leader* recalled the Dickens incident, which had occurred long before that newspaper was born. It printed an editorial under the caption "Prophecy Literally Fulfilled," pointing out that now at last "Hail, Columbia," was in truth played by British bands on London streets at the inauguration of a new lord mayor. The *Leader* credited the prophecy to Gray, thus accepting the Dickens error of assuming that the "prodigious" author of the tirade against England was the editor of the *Plain Dealer*.

Gray's first criticism of the *Notes* was pretty well sustained by the opinion of qualified judges. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in his journal:

Yesterday I read Dickens' American Notes. It answers its end very well, which plainly was to make a readable book, nothing more. Truth is not his object for a single instant, but merely to make good points in a lively sequence, and he proceeds very well. . . . As a picture of American manners nothing can be falsier. . . .⁷

⁵ January 25, 1843.

⁶ August 12, 1859.

⁷ November 25, 1842.

Stephen Leacock, a later Dickens biographer, characterizes one part of the *Notes* as the “work of a peevish cockney traveling without his breakfast.” This would have delighted Gray. And how Gray would have chuckled at Dickens’s dictum written at another time to Macvey Napier, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*: “An American editor [is] almost always a scoundrel”!

CHAPTER V

THE WEEKLY BECOMES A DAILY

Newspapers now forgotten parade through the early history of Cleveland. The Plain Dealer swallowed some, and persuaded others that the game was not worth the candle — to them.

No ambitious publisher in a growing community in the middle of the nineteenth century was content to have his reputation and fortune dependent on the success of a mere weekly or semi-weekly newspaper. No sooner was the weekly *Plain Dealer* fairly launched and its acceptance by the community assured than the Grays — or at least the younger of them — began thinking of publishing daily.

The partnership between the Grays was shortlived. On July 19, 1843, eighteen months after the appearance of the weekly, the following item of news attracted the attention of readers:

The co-partnership heretofore existing between A. N. and J. W. Gray in the publication of the Cleveland Plain Dealer is this day dissolved by mutual consent.

The business will be conducted by J. W. Gray who will settle the demands against the firm and to whom all dues must be paid.

A. N. Gray

J. W. Gray

One week later the paper announced a cut in subscription price from \$2 to \$1.50 a year, and at the same time boasted that

the *Plain Dealer* was "the cheapest weekly paper of its size published in Ohio or in the western states."¹

Just why the Grays severed their partnership relations so soon probably cannot now be established. It is probable, however, that A. N., the elder brother, found he had no taste for newspaper publishing when it began to assume the character of a serious enterprise. His aptitudes lay in other directions. He was inclined to business and not to the conduct of a political organ in a politically hostile community.

His career, after leaving the partnership with J. W., was identified largely with railroad-building. He accumulated a considerable fortune, partly in Cleveland real estate.

The younger brother offers a study in contrasts. J. W., too, proved himself a capable business man, but his greater interest lay in political argument. His loyalty to the Democratic Party was second only to his loyalty to God and country. He loved the turmoil of partisan conflict. He was convinced, with an ardor characteristic of the period, that the welfare of the country depended on an intelligent application of Jacksonian principles to the problems of government.

Thus it is obvious that the mind of J. W. Gray turned early to the idea of making the *Plain Dealer* an evening daily. He had put behind him all idea of practicing law. That the minds of the partner-brothers did not travel together on this proposal to expand the publishing business may be easily imagined.

Two months after J. W. Gray became sole proprietor of the paper, the following paragraph announced the program he had in mind:

In due time we hope to present to the citizens of Cleveland a Daily paper which shall eclipse this "modern wonder" (The *Herald*) in every particular.²

The evening *Plain Dealer* was still many months from actual production. But plans for its beginning were going forward.

¹ This was a direct challenge to the *Herald*, then selling for \$2 a year.

² September 27, 1843.

The first definite announcement of the forthcoming daily came on March 5, 1845 and its first publication date was then fixed for the beginning of the next month. Three weeks later Gray announced the motto for the yet-to-appear daily:

Cleveland before any other town in the state; the state before any other state in the Union; and the Union against the world! ³

Finally, on April 7, came the first issue of the daily *Plain Dealer*, with its inevitable salutatory:

WE'RE AFLOAT

Our ship is launched! Who does not say, "Prosperous gales attend her!" Our freight is light, but enough is laid up "in store" for us to make our voyage successful, —

No trembling hand is at the helm
Propitious skies are o'er us.

We embark with *three hundred* names to our yearly list. If we swell this number to *five hundred* which we hope soon to do under the *shilling-a-week* system, it is all we can reasonably hope at present.

We now offer our daily to the business men of Cleveland as a help to their interests, and feel that we have a right to ask their aid in return. — So far we have been highly gratified with the interest which commercial men of both parties have taken in the enterprise. All agree it is for the direct interest of the place to support a well conducted independent daily paper of each of the great political parties; so that, whichever party is in power, local interests shall not suffer from want of an effective advocate.

The present administration seems to be one of marked quietness and order, so much so as to inspire the confidence of even its political enemies; and we are disposed to share with the community the disposition to let the "turbid pool of politics" comparatively alone, until such time as "the war trump needs to sound," or until silence shall cease to command success.

A further profession of faith appeared elsewhere in this first issue:

N. P. Willis, the talented editor of the New York Evening Mirror, dedicates his editorial labors to the "upper ten thousand." . . .

³ March 26, 1845.

We profess a faith which acknowledges no such distinction in society. Our creed recognizes in rights the natural equality of men, whether fiddlers or philosophers. All are made of the same dust, and were designed by Him who is "no respecter of persons," to stand in life upon the same platform. There will be no "upper" nor *under* "ten thousand" with us.

The *Cleveland Herald*, which Gray was setting out to surpass in excellence, greeted its new rival with gracious courtesy:

DAILY PLAIN DEALER — Our enterprising neighbor issued the first number of the Daily Plain Dealer yesterday, and a very neat, creditable sheet it is, too.⁴

Little could the writer of this cordial welcome have imagined that forty years later the *Herald* would lower its flag in surrender, and that the *Plain Dealer* would move in to take possession of its franchises and its physical plant.

Until now the only Democratic daily in Ohio had been published at Cincinnati.

By the end of the second week the editor was ready to report flattering prospects for the new venture. The circulation was already above four hundred. He continued:

At the present rate of increase it will soon exceed that of any other daily ever published in this city. . . .

There are many who complain of poverty and deny themselves this trifling expense who spend *several shillings a week* for cigars, sangarees and the like which do them no good. . . .⁵

The advent of the daily *Plain Dealer* gave Cleveland three evening papers. The first morning edition was still some years in the future. The long-established *Herald*, published by J. A. Harris, was an organ of the Whigs. The recently started *Ohio American*, published by R. B. Dennis of Ohio City, was devoted to the interests of the Liberty Party.⁶

⁴ April 8, 1845.

⁵ April 9, 1845.

⁶ The *American* was later sold to the *True Democrat* and ultimately found itself part of the combination which was the *Cleveland Leader*.

In a business sense, omitting consideration of politics and the hostile political attitude of the community, however, the time seemed favorable for the launching of the new journalistic ship. Cleveland had already begun that phenomenal growth in commerce and population which was to give it distinction among American cities. A census taken by Elijah Peets in March 1845 gave Cleveland 9,573 inhabitants. By the federal census of 1850 the city would be found to have a population of 17,600, with another 4,523 across the river in Ohio City.

One of the early issues of the new daily, commenting on the increased population of Ohio City, declared that "could the annexation scheme of uniting the two cities, Cleveland and Ohio City, be consummated 'without war' we could easily figure up a population of 13,000. That would place us in the catalogue of 'big cities' and make us a great city." Thus early in its career did the *Plain Dealer* enlist in the cause of metropolitan unity. But the actual merger of the two municipalities was to be delayed for nearly a decade.

Here were prosperity and promise to be partaken of. And Gray set about determinedly to get his share of them.

The editor probably agreed that his skies were already brightening when in this year of 1845 the first city ordinance of record which designated a newspaper to do the municipal printing was enacted, naming the daily *Plain Dealer*.

One year after the appearance of the daily came the Mexican War. The *Plain Dealer* supported the Polk administration in every war measure, particularly criticizing the *Cleveland Herald* for its anti-war attitude.⁷ Gray urged greater activity in enlistments and denounced current pacifist meetings. On one

⁷ The *Herald* said, on June 6, 1847: "We are fighting for nothing, absolutely nothing, save it be for the gratification of a brutal lust of war — a passion which, if it exists, we are persuaded is confined to the corrupt political bankrupts at the capital. Let the war cease — now, and without another blow!"

occasion he declared: "The Whigs have carried Ohio and the Democrats have carried Monterey!"⁸

By June 1849 the *Plain Dealer* had won rare words of praise from the *True Democrat*, its energetic young Whig competitor:

Our neighbor [the *Plain Dealer*] appeared Wednesday evening [June 13] in a new garb, tidy and trim, sparkling with humor and full of good feeling. He is a man of energy and will be rewarded. He has ever been generous in outlay and a liberal public will repay him fourfold. In look and form, in spirit and substance, the *Plain Dealer* is a paper of which any city might be proud.⁹

The plank-road era was at hand. The highway to Chagrin Falls was to be the first. It would cost twenty thousand dollars, half of which the Falls was ready to pay if Cleveland would provide the other half. The *Plain Dealer* urged that the improvement be not delayed. "Ohio," it declared, "is the worst state in the Union to travel in, especially northern Ohio."¹⁰ Plank roads, the paper declared, "fully answer all the purposes the most sanguine claim for them."¹¹

By the first of the year 1850 a few of Cleveland's streets, it was promised, would soon be lit by gas. "How citified we shall appear," the *Plain Dealer* remarked.¹² "We are soon to be a 'city set on a hill whose light cannot be hid.'"¹³

In a communication to the editor a group of store employees asked that these places of business close at eight instead of ten each night. The petitioners "deem it necessary that a portion of their time should be devoted to mental improvement and the study of branches holding a near relation to their employment."¹⁴ Two days later the names of seventy-three employers were published as agreeing to the earlier closing hour. Among the names was that of J. W. Gray.

It has been a habit of Cleveland through the years to out-

⁸ October 19, 1846.

⁹ June 15.

¹⁰ December 12, 1848.

¹¹ January 1, 1849.

¹² April 3, 1849.

¹³ September 8, 1849.

¹⁴ November 9, 1848.

grow its own police facilities. What was probably one of the first newspaper editorials of protest against neglecting this first line of city defense appeared in the *Plain Dealer* in 1853. There was, it seems, a "crime wave."

"Cleveland is growing up into a great city," the paper said. "Enterprise and improvements have stamped their signet on her." Then:

Her present police system is not suited to her capacities nor her wants. In fact, whatever it may have been it is now a sheer humbug. We say not one word against the officials now acting. Most of them are passable — some are all that is wanted. But the system is deficient. There are now for a population of, say, 27,000, but three or four acting constables. To guard the residences of that number of people half a dozen watchmen are all that are now employed. Crime and misery have much increased. We daily chronicle burglaries, thefts, murderous assaults and within a few weeks past we have penned the horrid particulars of two murders. . . .

Our entire police system must have renovation if crime is to be checked. . . .¹⁵

Gray's immediate task was, of course, to make a business success of a venture which had called for all the capital he could raise and all the resources of mind and body he could command.

By the time the daily *Plain Dealer* was off the ways, the long-discussed bank issue was nearing its end, and the tariff was being hotly debated. The subtreasury measure had become law and been repealed, but was to be again enacted under Polk. The *Plain Dealer* was ready to take a hand in the discussion.

It had declared its creed to be "a tariff for *revenue*, but not one cent for tribute."¹⁶ It was shortly to argue strenuously for free trade,¹⁷ and years later to deny with equal strenuousness that it had ever advocated free trade!¹⁸

¹⁵ January 1, 1853.

¹⁶ July 7, 1843.

¹⁷ January 1, 1849.

¹⁸ September 23, 1893.

The rising issue of slavery could not have been avoided, even had Gray wished to ignore it. He was not the kind of editor, however, who would even think of such an evasion. A month after the establishment of the daily he protested that other grave questions faced the country and should not be crowded out of consideration by the general tendency to emphasize the slavery issue.¹⁹

Gray deplores the doom which binds five millions of human beings in chains. He was not, however, an Abolitionist.²⁰

Thus the *Plain Dealer*, an infant in the local daily field, showed no inclination to adopt the pussyfoot. It was ready to discuss whatever was moot, and to meet trouble half-way.

Following the election of two Whig Governors in succession, Gray undertook a diagnosis. In a long editorial he discussed the causes of Democratic defeat:

Mismanagement in our opinion has caused the repeated failure of our party in this state, and that mismanagement is clearly traceable to our party leaders. . . . The Democratic platform has been so narrowed down and whittled away in this state that not room enough is left for the whole democracy to stand. . . .

The majority of the people in Ohio are Democrats in principle, Democrats by nature, by birth and by the noble and generous spirit of freedom, by the free air and boundless fields of the mighty west. . . .²¹

Politics and adverse election results, however, were not the sum of *Plain Dealer* worries in these first days of the daily. In August 1845 Gray called attention to a prospectus just issued for a new Cleveland Democratic paper to be called the *Times*. The prospectus contained words ominous to Gray's own enterprise, which was not yet on very firm ground:

The publication of a paper in Cleveland which shall fearlessly maintain the true principles of Jeffersonian Democracy and which

¹⁹ May 20, 1845.

²⁰ September 11, 1846.

²¹ November 3, 1845.

will not vacillate in its course or truckle to political opponents for mercenary purposes, has for some time been earnestly desired by a large and respectable portion of the Democracy of the state and especially of the county of Cuyahoga and the adjoining counties. In compliance with these wishes and the earnest solicitations of many of our political friends we now present our proposals for publishing such a paper and respectfully solicit subscriptions for its support.²²

The *Plain Dealer* saw in this proposal a challenge, and accepted it at once. Gray sized it up as a conspiracy between Postmaster Timothy P. Spencer and the proprietors of the *Herald*.

Between Gray and Spencer a feud had existed for some time. It came finally to involve Cave Johnson, Postmaster General in the Polk Cabinet, and was a political *cause célèbre* in the Western Reserve.

Gray accused Johnson of trying to use the patronage of his office to control the opinions of the *Plain Dealer* on the issue of slavery extension, particularly in relation to the Wilmot Proviso.²³

He charged Spencer with conspiring with Johnson and the *Herald* to undermine the prestige of the *Plain Dealer* as a Democratic organ. Spencer had been one of the proprietors of the old *Advertiser* and Gray had repeatedly assailed his management of the property. Finally he accused the postmaster of trying to collect postage on mail franked to the *Plain Dealer*.

In the midst of the controversy the Cuyahoga County Democratic committee, under the chairmanship of Gray, petitioned President Polk to remove Spencer from his federal office.²⁴ No action was taken on the petition at Washington, but it served further to fan the flame of resentment.

The feud, so far as Spencer was concerned, finally culminated in 1847 when he brought suit for libel against Gray. The defendant was promptly acquitted.

²² August 19, 1845.

²³ January 4, 1848.

²⁴ *Herald*, October 3, 1845.

The *Times*, happily for Gray, proved a shortlived wonder. Its first issue appeared on September 11, 1845. Horace Steele, formerly of Painesville, was editor. The hook-up with the *Herald*, as Gray saw it, lay in the fact that Peter Baxter, Steele's co-partner in the enterprise, was a former *Herald* pressman, and that the new paper used a *Herald* press. The *Herald* explained, however, that it was an old press, discarded when steam came into use for power.²⁵

Changing its status from weekly to daily in the fall of 1847,²⁶ the *Times* soon ran its course, proving to be merely another of the many competitors set up to embarrass the *Plain Dealer*. An inconspicuous paragraph in the *True Democrat* announced that the *Times* had been "merged" with the *Plain Dealer*.²⁷

Thus ended one of the major threats aimed at the *Plain Dealer* in its earlier days. Gray had preserved his paper's command in its particular field, and continued to speak with authority as representative of the Democracy in northern Ohio.

In spite of feuds and sometimes expensive competition, the daily was able from time to time to show signs of some prosperity. At the beginning of 1852 it announced "new paper — new terms." Its delivery was now given by contract to Irad L. Beardsley, former bookkeeper of the *Plain Dealer* and a future part owner of the paper for a short period. This contract plan was copied from Eastern papers and was for some years in vogue in Cleveland.²⁸ Gray coupled with the announcement a plea for more subscribers: buying a daily paper "is a *duty* which every married man owes to his family, to see them thus supplied with the means of general intelligence and the motives of morality and economy."²⁹

A week later the paper was increased in size from seven to

²⁵ April 17, 1846.

²⁶ October 10.

²⁷ February 2, 1849.

²⁸ Newspapers then "sold" their circulation to someone who conducted it for his own profit.

²⁹ January 5.

eight columns, and the columns lengthened. A reasonable measure of boasting seemed to be in order. Still:

Because we are dressed up and feel that we not only *are* but look respectable, we are not going to assume any airs among our brethren, but intend to be noticed hereafter as heretofore for our amiable temper, quiet, inoffensive manner, native modesty and a disposition to do the "agreeable" to all mankind, and advance the interests of the Democratic party. . . .³⁰

Four months later Gray became so confident of the hold the paper had on the community that he decided to give the *Plain Dealer* a morning as well as an evening edition. The first issue of the new edition appeared on May 10, but the enterprise proved ill-timed. For once Gray's ambition had outrun his judgment. Other attempts to branch into the morning field would be made, but the morning *Plain Dealer*, as present-day readers know it, was still decades in the future.

By trial and triumph, failure and success, J. W. Gray proved there was a field here for a Democratic evening paper. The *Plain Dealer* speedily proved its right to exist.

³⁰ January 14, 1852. The size of the new page was 26½ by 20¼ inches.

CHAPTER VI

ARTEMUS WARD

Humorist who could make Lincoln laugh even in war's darkest hours took his first steps toward world fame when he was "local" on the Plain Dealer.

THE WAR Cabinet of Abraham Lincoln had assembled at the White House on a special call by the President. No member knew the purpose of the meeting. But the date, September 22, 1862, was to be remembered through generations to come as historic.

As the Cabinet members gathered, the President was observed quietly reading from a small volume. As the last were seated he raised his sad eyes from the printed page and said: "Gentlemen, did you ever read anything from Artemus Ward? Let me read you a chapter that is very funny."

No one smiled. The fretful Stanton fairly fumed. Here was the head of the Union wasting the time of a government distraught by war, while he indulged in his love of humor. He read the chapter; then he read another. Finally:

"Gentlemen, why don't you laugh? With the fearful strain that is upon me night and day, if I did not laugh I should die, and you need this medicine as much as I do."

Then the President took from his tall hat standing on the table beside him the Emancipation Proclamation and read it to the Cabinet.

Of the scores of men who have contributed conspicuously to the success of the *Plain Dealer* during the century, receiving in return the privilege of a forum suited to their wares, probably no other became so widely known or is so fondly remembered as Charles Farrar Brown.¹ If the name sounds unfamiliar, substitute his pseudonym, and call him Artemus Ward.²

The name Artemus Ward first appeared in the columns of the *Plain Dealer*. The last sentence the humorist ever wrote, penciled on his death-bed, mentioned the *Plain Dealer* and the duties it imposed on him as its "local."

A bronze tablet at the main entrance to the *Plain Dealer* editorial floor commemorates Artemus Ward's services to the paper. A bust of the humorist stands in the office of the editor. The chair and table he used have a place in the Museum of the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland.

These are physical mementos of a career cut short by death when Artemus Ward was only thirty-three years of age. His books are little read now. But a man who could by his cleverness and the piquancy of his philosophy take the mind of Abraham Lincoln off his troubles in the midst of the Civil War needs no artificial aids to enduring fame.

¹ Not until the time of his connection with *Vanity Fair* did Brown add a final "e" to his name. Why he did so then has never been explained, so far as the present writer knows. The family name was Brown. The name on the humorist's tombstone in the cemetery at Waterford, Maine, is Brown.

² Where Brown found his pseudonym is a question once much discussed. Don C. Seitz, his biographer, says the name was that of an eighteenth-century man to whom the Province of Massachusetts Bay granted part of the land on which Waterford, Maine, Brown's birthplace, stands. The name was thus a sort of Brown family tradition.

Henry Watterson, who met Brown in the clubs and drawing-rooms of London, writes in his autobiography: "The soubriquet Artemus Ward . . . was suggested by an actual personality. In an adjoining town to Cleveland was a snake charmer who called himself Artemus Ward, an ignorant witling or half-wit, the laughing stock of the countryside. Brown's first communication over the signature Artemus Ward purported to emanate from this person, and it succeeded so well that he kept it up."

Three years spanned Artemus Ward's connection with the *Plain Dealer*. Into this short period the journeyman printer from Maine packed a lifetime of original achievement. His contribution both to literature and to journalism is everywhere recognized.

Charles Farrar Brown was born at Waterford, Maine, April 26, 1834, of pioneer New England stock. Hannibal Hamlin, Vice President with Lincoln, was a distant cousin. His father was a citizen of standing and official position in the community. Charles, following the example of his elder brother, Cyrus, became a printer, leaving his home for the type-case when thirteen years old.

That was the day of the roving printer. If it was difficult for an effervescent spirit like Brown to be content long to hold a job, at least it was not difficult for him to find another. The great, enticing West beckoned. At twenty Charlie Brown had seen enough of the print shops of New England and was ready for adventure beyond the Alleghenies. Ohio was his goal.

Cincinnati, being then the metropolis of the state and on the great river highway, naturally attracted the jobless printer. He set type there, tried school-teaching across the border in Kentucky, then wandered north across the state. There is a record of his employment at South Charleston. He reached Sandusky, found nothing there, but heard that a vacancy existed at Tiffin in the composing-room of the *Seneca Advertiser*.

The editor and proprietor of the *Advertiser* was William W. Armstrong, and Armstrong was to become ten years later the editor and owner of the *Plain Dealer*. Brown would, however, leave the paper for broader fields before the advent of the man from Tiffin.

"I believe," said Armstrong afterward of his to-be-famous employee, "that he was the gawkiest, greenest-looking young fellow I had ever set eyes on." Though later he was to become a man of the world, successful as a writer and lecturer, he never quite escaped the essential accuracy of this description. His

physical oddity was part of his humorist's bag of tricks. He was "distinguished" in more senses than one!

Brown's stay at Tiffin was short, as all his stops through a brief life were to be. Perhaps the four dollars a week³ he received from the *Advertiser* seemed too small, or the old wander-lust asserted itself again. At any rate, within a year Brown was in Toledo, setting type on the *Commercial*. It was here he took the step which so many of his kind had taken and have continued to take through the years. He left the type-case for a desk in the editorial room. He became the "local" of the *Commercial*.

His work in Toledo attracted the attention of Gray of the *Plain Dealer*. The two men were in many ways kindred spirits. Gray had now directed the *Plain Dealer* for fifteen years. Cleveland knew him as a person of infinite energy who loved his jests, made friends easily, and was always in the market for the unusual performance. He liked the sparkle of Brown's work at Toledo.

So at the end of October 1857 Charles Farrar Brown pulled an armchair up to an old pine table in the editorial room of the *Plain Dealer* Building at Superior and Vineyard Streets and began the short career in Cleveland which was to make history in the realm of letters. Curiously enough, he came primarily to be commercial editor. His work as city editor was intended to be incidental. In these words Brown's new employer welcomed him to the local fraternity:

AN ADDITIONAL EDITOR

In view of the fact that the *Plain Dealer* circulates extensively throughout the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan and in view of the fact also that these states contain millions of surplus products yet unmarketed and are destined in the future to be the granary of the world, we have felt it due our patrons that a COMMERCIAL EDITOR should be added to our present editorial force, one who will take specially in charge the *commercial department* and collect and collate market reports from all parts

³ This was, presumably, in addition to his board and lodging.

of the world and give in condensed form the most reliable figures to our readers. For this purpose we have secured the services of Mr. Charles F. Brown, Esq., lately of the Toledo *Commercial*, and who comes to us highly recommended as a scrupulously correct and diligent business man, a talented and agreeable writer. Mr. Brown will also have charge of the Local Column in place of Mr. Cleveland, our old and well-tried associate now promoted.*

That Brown speedily became something more to the paper than merely a commercial editor is indicated by the fact that before three weeks had elapsed his name was hoisted to the masthead as "associate editor." James D. Cleveland had now left the staff to become assistant clerk in the federal district court, a position which was to lead in a few years to a judgeship. Brown's immediate associates in the office were George Hoyt and James Brokenshire.

Of the office group of employees Brown became soon the dominant figure. The gawkinsness which had so impressed Armstrong at Tiffin had not left him. He was still an odd figure of a man. James F. Ryder, famous early Cleveland photographer, was to become one of Brown's warmest friends. Ryder once described his first meeting with the newcomer:

On going into the Plain Dealer editorial rooms one morning I saw a new man and was introduced to him as Mr. Brown. He was young, cheerful in manner, tall and slender, not quite up to date in style of dress, yet by no means shabby. His hair was flaxen and very straight; his nose, the prominent feature of his face, was Romanesque — quite violently so, with a leaning to the left. His eyes were blue-gray, with a twinkle in them; his mouth seemed so given to a merry laugh, so much in motion, that it was difficult to describe, so we let it pass. It seemed as though bubbling in him was a lot of happiness which he made no effort to conceal or hold back. When we were introduced he was sitting at his table writing; he gave his leg a smart slap, arose and shook hands with me and said he was glad to meet me. I believed him for he looked glad all the time. You couldn't look at him but that he would laugh. He laughed as he sat at his table writing,

* November 2, 1857.

and when he had written a thing which pleased him he would slap his leg and laugh. . . .⁵

The story of Charles Farrar Brown's three years with the *Plain Dealer* is a part of the history of Cleveland of that period.

Any twentieth-century metropolitan city editor, remembering the exacting requirements of his own job, might feel some amusement in observing the daily column or so produced by Brown. In truth, to entertain seemed then as much the purpose of the local column as to inform. *Plain Dealer* readers turned to the work of the new "local" more to enjoy his quizzical slant on events than to gain information of the events themselves.

This was a day long preceding the advent of the now popular newspaper columnist. Brown would today probably have written and edited a column of humor, and the column might have been syndicated. Eighty-three years ago he was, in his triple role as commercial editor, local editor, and associate editor, in essence a columnist under the more cumbersome title.

Whatever staidness the *Plain Dealer* retained in other parts of the paper was neutralized by the local column. Inevitably, readers began to look each afternoon for Brown's curious interpretations of Cleveland occurrences rather than to Gray's expositions of political doctrine. The free hand given Brown in fixing the character of his department may well be the envy of present-day newspaper workers accustomed to the discipline of a more conventional performance.

Toward the end of January 1858, three months after the advent of the man from Maine, the metamorphosis of Charles Farrar Brown to Artemus Ward was suddenly achieved. Readers of the paper one afternoon were greeted with this bit of "local intelligence":

Mr. Artemus Ward, proprietor of the well-known side-show, writes us from Pittsburg as follows:

⁵ *Voigtlander and I*, by James F. Ryder, a volume of reminiscences published in 1902.

Pittsburg, Jan. 27, 18 & 58

The Plane Deeler:

Sir:

i write to no how about the show bisnes in Cleeveland i have a show consisting in part of a Californy Bare two snakes tame foxes &c also wax works my wax works is hard to beat, all say they is life and nateral curiosities among my wax works is our Saveyer Gen taylor and Docktor Webster in the akt of killing Parkmen. now mr. Editor scratch off a few lines and tel me how is the show bisnis in your good city i shal have hanbils printed at your offis you scratch my back and i will scratch your back, also git up a grate blow in the paper about my show don't forgit the wax works.

Yours truly,
Artemus Ward
Pittsburg Penny

P S. pittsburg is a l horse town. A. W.

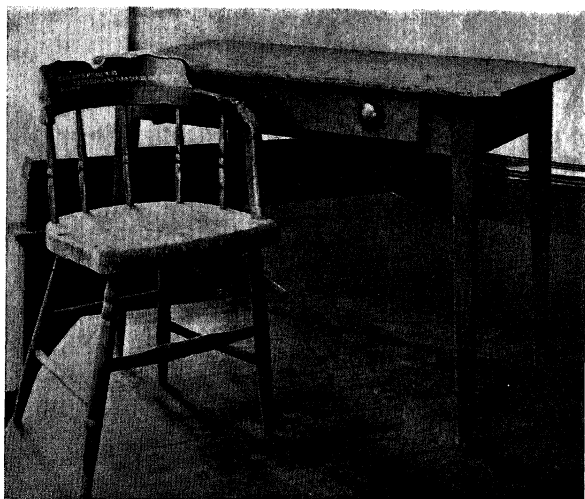
To this was added the supposed answer of the editor to his correspondent's inquiry:

We believe Mr. W. would do well with his show here, and advise him to come along immediately.

Of course, Artemus Ward's show never reached Cleveland. From time to time the public was regaled with the showman's experiences at various places. The "bisnes" was always coming to Cleveland and was on the way, but difficulties continually intervened. For the next two years, however, Artemus kept his pseudonym before the local public through a variety of contributions ranging from alleged interviews with popular figures of the day to a story of the showman's courtship.

Many of these articles were later revised, and now appear in the published works of the humorist. Some have completely lost their savor, so closely related were they to contemporary happenings.

For three mad, merry years Artemus Ward kept Cleveland amused by his antics. His friends were many, and he was their acknowledged leader. The cocktail bar as a descriptive term had not yet been invented, but the institution itself thrrove under



ARTEMUS WARD
HIS TABLE AND CHAIR

New York Office Nov 27

Mr. Weedon

Dear Sir

I am anxious to get the President's Message in advance of the Mail from your place so as to beat the Herald. An express from Hudson here would come in advance of the Mail some three hours & I have thought if it can be taken by a Post Rider immediately upon the opening of your mails & sent to me at least in time to set it up before the Herald. If you think this feasible & will make the arrangement with some one, I will pay all expenses & be very much obliged to you.

Respectfully

J. W. Gray

J. W. Gray

A LETTER BY J. W. GRAY TO THE POSTMASTER AT HUDSON

He wanted to beat the Herald.

other names and the *Plain Dealer* man's jovial presence was everywhere welcome.

Stories of his pranks were common currency in the community. His presentation of articles allegedly written by the "three tigers of the Cleveland press" — the editors of the *Plain Dealer*, *Herald*, and *Leader* — was an act which took liberties with the names of men who were accustomed to being taken seriously. To J. A. Harris, editor of the *Leader*, he ascribed a vigorous defense of prize fighting. George A. Benedict, editor of the *Herald*, was made to sing the praises of the well-dressed man. J. W. Gray, the humorist's own employer, found his name in a by-line above an article decrying dancing as an evil which "destroys more people than War, Pestilence and Famine."

The spice of the performance is indicated by the fact that Gray loved dancing and, until ill health diminished his natural effervescence, was to be seen enjoying it on many a waxed floor. How he enjoyed the "kidding" of his whimsical associate is nowhere recorded. Artemus Ward was making friends for the *Plain Dealer* and that was probably enough for the moment to salve any feelings of resentment Gray may have felt.

Recalling some years later the work he did on the *Plain Dealer*, Artemus Ward wrote that "he was kept very busy indeed from 8 o'clock in the morning till half past 3 in the afternoon in collecting the police reports and other items that might be of local interest." But these were not the activities which made him famous or gave him pleasure. He may have been kept "very busy indeed" performing the regulation duties of a local editor and reporter, but he had time enough left to do the things he delighted in doing.

As time went on and the humorist's horizon broadened, it is evident that he became less and less interested in "collecting the police reports." He felt the urge to create. He hungered for a wider acclaim than a subordinate position on a small-city daily could give him. The popular lecture was then the vogue, and Artemus began turning over in his mind the idea of taking some

of his whimsies to the platform. Apparently without consulting Gray, he began syndicating his copy to *Vanity Fair* in New York.

Gray did not quite approve of his associate's sprouting wings. He had brought him to the *Plain Dealer*, paid him his salary, and thought the paper should receive the benefit of whatever he produced. Besides, Gray was by the autumn of 1859 in failing health and perhaps lacked the patience or the understanding he would have had when his health was more vigorous.

Friction between the men gradually developed. Artemus Ward agreed to remain with the paper and give it all his time and his complete output for a hundred dollars a month.⁶ That seemed to Gray an impossible exaction. Thus ended Artemus's connection with the *Plain Dealer*, after three years. On November 11, 1860 appeared the following farewell:

VALE

The undersigned closes his connection with the PLAIN DEALER with this evening's issue. During the three years that he has contributed to these columns he has endeavored to impart a cheerful spirit to them. He believes it is far better to stay in the Sunshine while we may, inasmuch as the Shadow must of its own accord come only too soon. He cannot here, in fit terms, express his deep gratitude to the many including every member of the Press of Cleveland, who have so often manifested the most kindly feeling toward himself. But he can very sincerely say that their courtesy and kindness will never be forgotten.

The undersigned may be permitted to flatter himself that he has some friends among the readers of newspapers.

Charles F. Brown

With equal appearance of cordiality the editor bade his famous and talented associate farewell and good luck:

Our associate Mr. Brown has had a "louder call," as the Reverends would say, and goes to a larger city, where he can enlarge his sphere

⁶ His salary at the time was either ten or twelve dollars a week. Reports do not agree on the figure.

of usefulness. To do the Locals for a daily paper in a city like this is a drudgery, cramping to such a genius as his, and we cannot blame him for aspiring to a higher position. It is the lot of our Locals to rise in the world. Bouton built himself such a reputation while with us that he went to New York and is now City Editor of the *Journal of Commerce*. McLaren, another Local, is now preaching the gospel; and Brown is destined to become either a minister or an author, perhaps both. Our relations are now and always have been of the most agreeable kind, and we part with him with many regrets.

Of the later career of Artemus Ward, little need be said here. The story is known to everyone familiar with the Civil War period in American letters. After leaving Cleveland Artemus Ward became editor of *Vanity Fair*. He lectured from coast to coast in this country. He was a friend of Bret Harte and Mark Twain and of other literary figures of the time.

After J. W. Gray's death in 1862, when the *Plain Dealer* was published by John S. Stephenson, administrator of the Gray estate, Artemus Ward proposed to buy the paper if proper terms could be arranged.⁷ He feared his days of profitable lecturing were about over, he liked Cleveland and would enjoy returning there to live. The paper could then have been bought for a not extravagant figure, for the owners of the estate wished to sell, but seemingly the matter was never pressed.

One might indulge in conjecture as to how successful Artemus Ward would have been as owner and publisher of a daily newspaper. If ever a man of attainments existed who appeared unsuited by habit and temperament to conduct such a business, meet payrolls, and give a paper the influence in the community it must have to merit success, Artemus Ward would seem now to have been the man.

June 1866 found the humorist in London, preparing for a se-

⁷ About the time of Artemus Ward's death his friend Mark Twain was offered and seriously considered buying a share in the *Cleveland Herald*. Had Artemus bought the *Plain Dealer* and lived, and had Mark bought into the *Herald* — excusing the accumulation of hypotheses — what a jolly pair of competing editors they would have been!

ries of lectures there. He was welcomed with enthusiasm on all sides. He contributed to *Punch*, the oldest comic journal in the English language. Halls were packed for his lectures. His fame had preceded him abroad and here was the former *Plain Dealer* "local" capitalizing it magnificently.

But alas for fame and talent! Artemus Ward, weakened by overwork and the penalties of too much conviviality, proved a ready victim of tuberculosis. His days of fun-making, of drollery and make-believe were near an end. He was taken from the chill atmosphere of London to the island of Jersey, but there was no cure and no recovery. There on March 6, 1867 Artemus Ward died. He was seven weeks less than thirty-three years of age.

His last thoughts had been of the *Plain Dealer* and his days in Cleveland. "Some twelve years ago," he wrote from his bed of death, "I occupied the position (or the position occupied me) of city editor of a journal in Cleveland, Ohio. This journal — the *Plain Dealer* — was issued afternoons . . ." Before the statement was completed, the pencil dropped from his fingers and was never again picked up.

Thus ended the brief career of a man aptly called the Father of American Humor. Artemus Ward was in the years ahead to be paid the compliment of frequent emulation, but himself was without a forerunner. Mark Twain, less than two years his junior, learned much from the *Plain Dealer* man and generously acknowledged the debt. Artemus Ward thus paved a way which others were glad to follow.

Beneath the comic superficiality of his written words, as behind the "mask of melancholy" donned for platform effect, lay the humorist's understanding of the contrasts and incongruities of the life of the period which saw him flourish. His queer spelling, his verbal quips and puns — generally outmoded now — were the marks of a genius and a pioneer. That his work is now but little read detracts nothing from his stature as a literary figure of the era of the Civil War.

CHAPTER VII

A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS OF WHIGGERY

Following the Jacksonian period, the Western Reserve was first Whig and then Republican. A Democratic Party organ found the going rough.

A good judge is Mr. Gray of Liberty feeling! Party is his God — Right principle, humanity, these are all secondary matters with him! ¹

THE DAILY *True Democrat* had all the ardor of a convert and wished no one to forget that it — and it alone — was the organ of the Free Soil Party in the Western Reserve. That the editor of a Democratic paper in this hotbed of anti-slavery emotion could possess any feeling of justice, or appreciate the rights of man, was an idea apparently beyond the comprehension of the press which represented the prevailing sentiment of the community.

The saga of the small-city minority editor in America has never been adequately told. It is part of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century history of journalism in the United States.

In his chapter on the *Liberator*, founded by his own grandfather in 1830 to fight slavery, Oswald Garrison Villard in *Some Newspapers and Newspaper-Men* portrays the lot of an editor who for conscience's sake was willing to endure privation, sleep on the floor of his attic print shop, and subsist on the scant

¹ *True Democrat*, March 26, 1850.

revenues of an unpopular cause. The enduring work of such a man as William Lloyd Garrison is better appreciated, however, in retrospect than in the judgment of his contemporaries.

Garrison, of course, published a national weekly. His few friends were scattered through the Northern states. His many enemies were even more widely placed. He depended on no particular community or limited geographical region for acclaim. Garrison was sustained in his historic labors by the fire of a moral zeal indifferent alike to men's scorn and the hard blows of fortune. His was the unusual performance, and Americans of every creed join now in paying homage.

While the great little *Liberator* was thus achieving its lasting glory, scores of editors in the small cities of America were less gloriously experiencing the hardships which in that period attended the role of minority spokesman in the field of newspaper publication. Theirs were political voices crying in the wilderness.

The cream of local advertising went to their rivals. Officially they were never permitted to forget their position as counsel for the outs. Socially, in many instances, they were given opportunity to practice chiefly the virtue of humility.²

They may have been right in the principles they advocated; they may have been wrong. It matters little after the years. All of this is largely a chapter of experience long since completed.

These spokesmen for the minority were of necessity a hardy lot, inured to abuse if not to Spartan living. It may be said that they chose the role of their own volition. Generally they invited the missiles of war which dropped in their dooryard or came crashing through the front window.

For many years the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* spoke for the political under-dog in the Western Reserve. From "benighted" Ashtabula on the east to Huron and Erie Counties on the west, majorities regularly tramping to the polls to vote their sincere

² The *Plain Dealer* insisted, December 8, 1848, that it was the only paper in Cleveland compelled to live on its merits.

convictions walked roughshod over the opinions of Editor J. W. Gray. He became accustomed to the rebuff. For most of the twenty years of his control of the paper these majorities, encouraged and abetted by Cleveland's other newspapers, regularly sounded an unheeded requiem for this organ of Democracy.

In an editorial written on the occasion of Gray's appointment as postmaster of Cleveland, in 1853, J. W. recalled the political difficulties which attended the birth of the weekly:

Just after the state of Ohio had given Harrison twenty-three thousand majority, Corwin fifteen thousand, the Reserve twelve thousand, Cuyahoga county twelve hundred and Cleveland city three hundred, without money and without experience we took hold of the Democratic paper here, then lying a *dead thing* on the hands of the Democracy and so involved that its title had been placed in the keeping of trustees by virtue of a sheriff's sale in order to keep it out of the hands of its creditors. . . .³

Successive publishers of the *Advertiser* had faced much the same problem of a politically hostile community. The Grays, at the birth of the new weekly, naturally hoped to succeed where others had failed. J. W., the younger of the founding brothers, was discovered in the years at hand to possess what it required in adversity to wrest a reasonable measure of success from the evident prospects of failure.

The period immediately following the establishment of the *Plain Dealer* saw a general loosening of party bonds, owing largely to the rise of anti-slavery sentiment in the North. The Whigs, coming into existence as a party in 1834, were already on their way out in 1842, though they succeeded in electing Taylor to the presidency six years later. The Liberty Party, owing its existence to the failure of the anti-slavery societies to make effective headway in the direction of abolition, held its first national convention in 1840.

This era of political unsettlement saw also the advent of the Free Soil Party, which was to play a short but spectacular role

³ April 6.

in Ohio. The Free Democrats tried to establish their independence of the organization whose name they were unwilling quite to abandon. There flowered also for a time the American or Know-Nothing Party, composed, its enemies declared, of Whigs in disguise.

John Tyler, the nation's first accidental President, was in the White House at the birth of the *Plain Dealer*. He was more Democrat than Whig, though elected on the ticket with William Henry Harrison. Tyler had carried the Western Reserve only because of the political strength of his running mate in this Whiggish territory. Thomas Corwin, a Whig, was Governor of Ohio. In the 1836, 1840, and 1844 national elections Whig candidates carried both the Reserve and Cuyahoga County. Even in 1842, when the Democrat Shannon was elected Governor, the Reserve and its chief city remained unshaken in their support of his opponent, Corwin. Down to 1853 it was a Whiggish boast that the counties of the Reserve could always be counted on for a 10,000 majority at least. After the state election in 1855 the *Leader* expressed mortification at the fact that Cuyahoga County had not shown the same enthusiasm for Chase as was indicated by the Reserve as a whole.⁴ The Reserve majority was about 13,000.

This region had been, indeed, from the start a citadel of anti-slavery strength. Western Reserve College at Hudson, under its first president, the Reverend Charles B. Storrs, had as early as 1830 thrown its influence into the cause. From the moment of its foundation in 1833 Oberlin College was also a center of anti-slavery agitation. In election after election one or another of the radical anti-slavery parties demonstrated that it held the balance of power. In 1842, when Shannon won the governorship, nearly half of the vote for King, Liberty Party candidate, came from this section of the state. Ever since the Jacksonian era the star of Democracy, so far as the Reserve was concerned, had been dropping into the west.

⁴ October 16.

This was the political atmosphere which greeted the advent of the *Plain Dealer*. It was to continue pretty much unchanged through the Gray regime, though the pendulum's swing would give the paper an occasional opportunity to boast of success in stemming the tide of adverse sentiment. Even when the national administration was controlled by the Democratic Party, the Western Reserve usually persisted in its political insurgency. But in 1848 and 1852 — flood tide of *Plain Dealer* hopes — the Democrats carried even this hotbed of anti-slavery sentiment for Cass and Pierce, their nominees for president. *Mirabile dictum!* The impossible had happened.

Gray took advantage of the surprising situation again to hail the success of his paper. He believed the days of discouragement were past; that the people of the Reserve had at last seen the light and would thenceforth support the cause to which he had dedicated his journalistic life. It would, however, be many a long year after 1852 before the occasion would repeat itself. Gray was a hard-headed political editor, but he was no seer.

By the time the presidential campaign of 1856 came around, the old situation had again come to pass. Though James Buchanan was elected, John C. Frémont, first nominee of the new Republican Party, carried Ohio and was given substantial majorities in the Reserve and in Cuyahoga County. Buchanan was to be the last Democrat elected to the presidency for nearly thirty years. The Democratic press faced a long period of prayer and fasting.

Whigs, Liberty men, Free Soil adherents, Free Democrats and American Party members would in time find a resting place in the bosom of the Republican Party. But while the harmonizing miracle was in the making, the war between the *Plain Dealer* and its newspaper enemies was waged with continuing relentless energy. The regular charge against Gray, as against other Democratic editors, was that he spoke for a party dead to humanitarian appeal; a party afraid to speak out against slavery lest it lose the South and its hope of control at Washington.

Wise men in the various anti-slavery camps saw that the only hope for success against the hated institution lay in the direction of party fusion, a merger of these several parties, each ineffective by itself. By the same token, it was the part of Democratic strategy to resist and, if possible, prevent such fusion.

Gray argued that political fusion was unsound and destructive, taking the same position as the *New York Herald* and the *Ohio State Journal*, among others. The *Leader* met the issue of fusion with a fresh attack on the enemy:

The [Plain] Dealer belongs to a "fusion" party — a fusion of fogies, fools, fag-enders, flunkies, Catholics, slave-breeders, knaves and charlatans, bound together by the cohesive attraction of public plunder, Jesuitism and the fruits of unrecompensed labor. . . .⁵

Not all alliterative artistry, however, was confined to the *Leader* office. The *Plain Dealer* had referred to a local political convention as an effort to "fuse the fifty furious fickle factions of Fugledom. . . ." ⁶

The change of name from the *Forest City Democrat*⁷ to the *Leader* meant no lessening of hostility toward the *Plain Dealer*. Earlier in the year the *Democrat* had said:

The Plain Dealer most criminally suppresses the news of the general uprising of the people of the free states, commencing with the great meeting of capitalists of New York and extending like a mighty wave over the whole north. It is acting the part of the harlot Delila, and would drug the Democracy of northern Ohio asleep that they may be bound hand and foot and delivered over to the Philistines. . . .

The Plain Dealer next argues an abrogation of the Missouri com-

⁵ July 20, 1854.

⁶ September 5, 1853.

⁷ The *Forest City Democrat* had been formed by the merger of the *True Democrat*, started at Olmsted Falls in 1846, and the *Forest City*, established by Joseph and James Medill in 1852. In 1854 it changed its name to the *Cleveland Leader* and as such continued in existence until 1917. Under Edwin Cowles the *Leader* attained a measure of prosperity never before equaled by any paper on the Reserve.

pact in order, as it jesuitically affirms, that a clear field can be opened for the battle of freedom with slavery. . . .

Against the fast-rising tide of militant abolitionist sentiment on the Reserve, the *Plain Dealer* found itself helpless, but remained undaunted. Defending the Kansas-Nebraska Bill as a measure in complete harmony with Popular Sovereignty, Gray was daily made aware of the fact that his community was taking a different path from his own. He was experiencing the same revulsion of popular feeling as beat upon the sturdy soul of Stephen A. Douglas.

The Senator had written to a friend that on his way back to Illinois to meet the storm of protest caused by his advocacy of the compromise measure: "All along the Western Reserve of Ohio I could find my effigy upon every tree we passed."⁸

Speaking in a sense for those who inspired the effigies, the *Leader* declared that "the Dealer is nearly the last survivor on the Reserve which advocated the Nebraska villainy. It, too, would sleep the sleep that knows no waking — for the curse of the people is upon it — but for the fodder provided for it by the general government."⁹

After the election of Chase to the governorship in 1855, the *Leader* was certain that "locofocoism and Pro-Slavery are buried in the same grave and there is no hope of their resurrection."¹⁰

Increasingly the tendency of the majority was to define "liberty" as synonymous with "abolition." Gray steadfastly refused to subscribe to this popular trend.

Whigs of the North were, of course, opposed to slavery in all its gruesome aspects, but they were not zealous enough to satisfy the radicals. And this dissatisfaction contributed largely to the political disorganization which marked the period on the Western Reserve and elsewhere.

⁸ Quoted by George Fort Milton in *The Eve of Conflict*.

⁹ June 4, 1855.

¹⁰ October 12, 1855.

The spokesman for the Liberty Party in Cleveland was the *Ohio American*, established in 1844. The *True Democrat*, started as a Whig paper, would appear shortly to speak for the Free Soilers. The *Herald* remained fairly steadfast in its loyalty to the Whigs as long as they retained any promise of ultimate success.

Meanwhile the only nation-wide party which throughout this period retained its name and organization and a reasonably consistent set of principles was the Democratic Party of Jefferson and Jackson. To this party the *Plain Dealer* declared its allegiance at the start, and to it Gray remained true, in spite of efforts of his competitors to destroy him.

As the issues of the Civil War began to take form it may be said that, broadly speaking, the Democrats of the North were opposed to the extension of slavery, but inclined to a somewhat conciliatory policy toward it. Stoutly the party resisted abolition. Replying to a criticism by the *True Democrat*, the *Plain Dealer* declared:

Our pretensions as an anti-slavery man are what particularly troubles these editors. Long before the *True Democrat* was known and while these gentlemen were fighting Whig battles for Henry Clay, the prince of slave holders, the *Plain Dealer*, as its files for ten years will show, was struggling almost alone in these parts against slavery and the slave power. . . .¹¹

Gray, indeed, spoke from the record. At least as far back as 1845 he had denounced slavery and expressed the hope of its gradual extermination.¹² A little later he had explained in an editorial "why we are not an abolitionist."¹³

The *Plain Dealer* was consistently against slavery and against its extension into free territory. Just as consistently it was opposed to its peremptory and what Gray considered to be its unconstitutional abolition. "As far as political abolitionism is

¹¹ November 18, 1850.

¹² May 20.

¹³ September 11, 1846.

concerned," it declared, "there is not enough of it left to make a winding sheet for a dead dog."¹⁴

Gray early saw, as Lincoln did, that the primary issue of the approaching war was the preservation of the Union and not the destruction of slavery. He rejoiced when the House at Columbus voted to sweep the "black laws" from the statute books.¹⁵ "They have long been a disgrace to the state," the paper declared.

He opposed the idea of a convention with Southern men, proposed to discuss the slavery question.¹⁶ Repeatedly in the decade before the Civil War Gray urged Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, where its authority could not be questioned on constitutional grounds.

As to the extension of slavery beyond its then existing boundaries, the *Plain Dealer* defined its own and the Democratic Party position in the following editorial:

What of this charge that the Democracy are slave extensionists? The territories are settled by citizens from all the different states. As citizens of either of the states they could control by their votes the domestic institutions and laws of those states, subject only to the Constitution of the United States. They go to the territories to found new states. As citizens of the territories common sense would say they should there also — and to the same extent — by their votes control the domestic policy and institutions of the states that are to be. Why, because they have crossed the line dividing state and terri-

¹⁴ Quoted by the *Leader*, August 13, 1855.

¹⁵ January 31, 1849. The first of the Ohio "black laws" was enacted in January 1804, and was called an act "to regulate black and mulatto persons." By its terms no person of color was permitted to reside in the state unless he should first show a certificate from some federal court that he was free. Ohioans were forbidden to employ or harbor one without such a certificate. The original act was supplemented by further legislation in 1807, 1816, and 1831, stiffening its provisions and making the lot of the Negro or mulatto more difficult. The laws were finally repealed in 1849 when thirteen Free Soil legislators from the Western Reserve found themselves in possession of the balance of power in the General Assembly.

¹⁶ April 9, 1849.

tory, are they therefore rendered incompetent to act as citizens any longer? And why should Congress — which is nothing more than a representative embodiment of the interests, party prejudices and even honest judgment of *other* states — compel a policy for the new states or territories at variance with the will and desire of *bona fide* actual citizens of those territories or states? There is no right reason for it — no justice in the pretension. The people of the *old* states govern themselves. The people of the *new* states *should* govern themselves. This is the Democratic doctrine. This is the *true* republican doctrine, though *not* the doctrine of Black Republicanism.¹⁷

Add to this the *Plain Dealer's* support of the idea of colonization, which Lincoln himself had advocated, and one has in outline what Gray thought of the problem which held the whole North in violent debate. In April 1859 the paper returned to the subject to urge again the desirability of colonizing Negroes on a voluntary basis, continuing:

We have ever contended that Africa was the spot, the quarter of the Globe, originally designed for them and to which our free colored population should be *encouraged*, not *driven*, to go. . . . This is a government of *white* men; let them establish a government of *colored* men.¹⁸

On one point of anti-slavery creed, however, Gray completely changed his position as the battle grew warmer. Toward the end of 1847 the *Plain Dealer* said: "We believe the principle of the Wilmot Proviso to be the correct principle."¹⁹

But nearly ten years later Gray was ready to confess:

. . . We, too, in our younger days, with Gen. Cass and many other distinguished members of the Democratic party, believed that Congress had power to impose any restrictions it pleased upon territories, even to the establishment or prohibition of slavery and, with this in view, favored the Wilmot Proviso as a means of preventing

¹⁷ October 24, 1856.

¹⁸ April 11.

¹⁹ November 16.

the extension of that "peculiar institution."²⁰ But a fair reading of the Constitution allows no such construction of its powers, and we are glad it does not. We had rather trust that question with the people, the virtuous, intelligent and incorruptible people than with Congress. . . .²¹

The *Plain Dealer* was, of course, by Gray's frequent admission, a party organ and Gray called himself a politician. These facts may, perhaps, be taken to excuse a reasonable amount of inconsistency. However, in spite of the efforts of newspaper enemies to tag Gray with the sin of denouncing one day what he had favored the day before, a reading of the record in these after years shows at least as reasonable a consistency on fundamental policies as his rivals and competitors could establish a claim to.

Yet the Democrats' alleged lack of moral indignation on the subject of slavery, and their refusal to subscribe to the radical doctrine of abolition, gave their enemies material for a perpetual bombardment of the *Plain Dealer* and its fighting editor.

The *Plain Dealer*, bellicose and uncompromising, was to feel the rapier thrusts of many a partisan encounter and to earn the scars of an unending warfare. Newspaper enemies would come and go. They recognized a common foe in the *Plain Dealer*. Differing among themselves, they were none the less a unit against the Democratic organ.

Year by year the confidence of the radicals grew stronger on the Reserve, as sentiment for abolition increased everywhere in the North.

"Perhaps it is not too much to say," declared the *Leader*, "that the Western Reserve, where the spirit of liberty has taken deep root and will flourish forever, is the cradle of liberty in Ohio."²²

²⁰ The Wilmot Proviso was an amendment offered by David Wilmot, Pennsylvania Congressman, to an appropriation bill in 1846, requiring that slavery should be prohibited in any territory acquired as a result of the Mexican War. The proposal did not become effective.

²¹ September 16, 1857.

²² October 2, 1855.

Dogmatic in its politics, the *Leader* was certain that "the Democratic party in this state is receiving accessions of pro-slavery Whigs and pro-slavery Know Nothings; but at the same time it is losing its very best members by scores and thousands."²³

A publisher with less fighting spirit than J. W. Gray possessed might well have been persuaded in these discouraging days that the printing of an opposition paper in such a community as Cleveland, or in any section of the Western Reserve, was hardly worth the necessary effort. Doubtless Gray did at times entertain some such question, but one must look beyond the columns of his paper for evidence of the fact.

Among the manuscript letters of Salmon P. Chase, now in the possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, are several written by Gray to the Senator, Governor, Cabinet member, and Chief Justice. In one of them, dated April 17, 1849, the editor discusses the political situation in the Reserve and its relation to the local press. Chase had recently gone to the Senate by virtue of a Free Soil and Democratic coalition in the Ohio Legislature. He had no patience or sympathy with the Ohio Whigs.

Gray pointed out that the Whig Party in the Reserve was able to maintain its supremacy largely because the political groups opposed to it were unable to act unitedly. "A union," he wrote to Chase, "could it be effected, among the Democrats, Liberty men and *genuine* free soilers would give liberty to us all, and it would be an easy matter to carry every county in the Reserve and make Ohio permanently an anti-administration state."

The only difficulty in the way of such "fraternization is in party names and party pride," Gray continued. "There is no quarrel about principle."

The *Plain Dealer*, Gray went on, was the "only paper in

²³ October 18, 1855. Even as late as 1875 (June 28) the *Leader* referred to the "war in which the Democratic party was trying to destroy the Republic."

northern Ohio that has dared defend free soil principles, policies or men." Accordingly, the editor wrote, "it has been proposed to divide the Plain Dealer establishment with some good and genuine free soiler, one who can editorially discharge its duties and pecuniarily share its profits."

Continuing: "I have to my friends in private consented to an arrangement of this kind, provided yourself & others politically interested thought it best & would give it countenance & support." Of several men mentioned as suited to assume this co-editorship of the *Plain Dealer*, Gray greatly preferred Stanley Matthews, a friend and supporter of Chase.²⁴

There was, however, an interesting condition attached to the proposal, as outlined by Gray. Local Democrats, he said, felt that the Free Soilers had "by far the Lion's share of the distribution of political appointments." There was "still undisposed of a small tit-bit in this county to wit, the clerkship of our county court," which the Democrats claim "they ought to have."

Now, if the Free Soilers would let the Democratic central committee dictate this appointment, the whole scheme of dividing the *Plain Dealer* could go through without a hitch. "Frankness requires me to add," wrote Gray, "that in all probability myself will be the man, if left to the selection" of the committee. Gray, then, was willing to dispose of half of the *Plain Dealer* "at a fair valuation" if Chase would help him get a clerkship in the county court!

²⁴ Matthews began the practice of law at Cincinnati in 1840 and after a distinguished career as editor, county judge, state legislator, federal district attorney, and lieutenant colonel in the war, he succeeded Sherman in the United States Senate in 1877. He went to the United States Supreme Court in 1881. The *Plain Dealer's* confidence in Matthews suffered a sharp diminution. Long after Gray's death the paper opposed Senator Pendleton of Ohio because he voted to confirm Matthews's appointment to the court. Still later Pendleton gave support to the *Cleveland Globe*, established to harass the *Plain Dealer*. Matthews was a pre-war Democrat, but a post-war Republican.

What Chase's answer to this suggestion was, or whether he made an answer, is not known. It is pretty certain that, had the plan gone through, the *Plain Dealer* would not now be celebrating its hundredth birthday. No stability of purpose could have been attained by such a division of responsibility.

The whole idea was probably soon dismissed from Gray's active mind. He had too many ramparts to watch to permit him the luxury of dreaming. Gray returned in memory to these belliose days when he wrote in 1853:

We venture to say there is not another instance on record in the whole country where a paper has ever lived, much less prospered, surrounded by so many untoward circumstances, and we are free to confess that during eight years of this time, with all economy, industry and zeal we could muster, no perceptible progress was made in the pecuniary condition of the concern. Had we been sick a month, it would have stopped. Had we been robbed of fifty dollars, it would have failed; and so we lived from hand to mouth, contending for "dear life" and the supremacy of Democracy.

Brighter days were ahead. Days even darker were also ahead. But, generally speaking, the *Plain Dealer's* fight for existence was to continue an uphill battle till after Gray had been in his grave for some years.

From time to time appeared evidence of the fact that the wolf was still a reasonable distance from the print-shop door. The *Plain Dealer* bought new equipment, more attractive type; it occasionally expanded its pages. As the year 1856 opened, Gray took the occasion of a further physical enlargement and improvement of the paper to recall its humble beginning.

Gray was now postmaster, the Democratic Party controlled the federal government, and, whatever the Western Reserve might think, the future looked rosy for the Cleveland editor who had so long preached minority doctrine to his home folk. He confesses a measure of his own pleasurable astonishment:

The change in our business has been marvelous in our own eyes. We commenced with a single hand press and one swearing roller

boy. We now have four hand presses, two steam power presses and have just ordered a third. Instead of *one* boy about our business, twenty-five find more or less steady employment every day. Instead of a little seven-by-nine publishing room, we have been compelled of late to use the entire interior of the Plain Dealer building — the basement for a folding and printing room, the third floor for editorial, counting and mailing rooms; the second floor for a job room; the third for the news room and book bindery, and the fourth for a paper box manufactory. . . .²⁵

These signs of *Plain Dealer* prosperity were observed in the other newspaper offices of Cleveland. In the midst of a wordy war with Editor Cowles, Gray quoted what had been said of him by the *Forest City* before its merger with the *Leader*:

As a political editor he is unquestionably the keenest Locofoco in Ohio. . . . A few years ago *this was the banner Whig district in the Union, now it is Locofoco!* The tactics of J. W. Gray are those of the uncle of his nephew; to *divide and conquer*. When the Free Soil tornado swept over Cheesedom he weighed anchor, furlled his sails and scudded before the storm under bare poles; and when it had expended its fury he quietly sailed back to the old hunker moorings, without having lost a man or a spar; while his former huge antagonist lay perfectly powerless, stranded on the beach and full of bilge water.

By browbeating one half and cajoling the other, he has succeeded in dismembering that once harmonious and omnipotent party and rendering men united by every tie of principle as hostile to each other as Kilkenny cats; while he and his friends are enjoying a delicious *Belshazzar Feast* of fat things plundered from the larder of the belligerents. . . .²⁶

However well-merited this curious, half-ironic tribute may have been at the moment, it had reference merely to a passing phase of the long battle in which Gray was engaged. Not for long at a time did he find himself privileged to feast on “fat things plundered” from his enemies.

The year before, the *Plain Dealer* had protested against the

²⁵ January 3, 1856.

²⁶ Quoted April 12, 1856.

burden of local taxes. To illustrate, it printed a list of Cleveland taxpayers, with the amount each was then paying. Leonard Case headed the group. About midway in a list of fifty or so appeared the name of J. W. Gray, whose assessment for the year was \$679.43. Obviously, the enemies of Gray, do all they could, had been unable to undermine the stability of the *Plain Dealer* as a business enterprise or to drive its proprietor very far toward bankruptcy.

Even with the Reserve's recurrent and increasing majorities for abolitionist candidates, and with the growing chasm between the political thinking of Gray and of those on whom he must depend for sustenance — even in the face of these unfavorable conditions — the *Plain Dealer* approached the period immediately preceding the Civil War with its resources ample and its fighting spirit undiminished. The continuous bombardment of the opposition press had failed of its main purpose: that of driving Gray and his enterprise out of the field.

Down through these stormy years before the war the voice in this wilderness of Whiggery continued to sound, always with defiance, usually with confidence, and occasionally in triumphant jubilation.

CHAPTER VIII

NEEDLES IN HAYSTACKS

Without railroads or wires, early editors found it difficult to get news for their columns. A late stage-coach meant an unhappy publisher.

WHEN Troy fell to Agamemnon, the legend is that news of the victory was carried back to Greece by means of flaming beacons placed on mountaintops.

One of the biggest problems publishers of the early newspapers had to solve was that of getting their news while it was still fresh enough to justify the name.

When the *Plain Dealer* was founded in 1842 there were no railroads in Cleveland, and of course no communication by wire. Stagecoaches, the only dependable year-round agency of rapid transportation, connected Cleveland with cities to the east, west, and south, but the conditions of the highways made anything like quick service out of the question. Mail first came into Cleveland by rail in 1851.

Eber D. Howe, first editor of the *Herald*, which was established in 1819, could at the start get mail only by horseback. He received it once a week from Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Columbus, and Sandusky. Cleveland was then forty news days from Europe and ten from New York.

Not long before the appearance of the *Plain Dealer* the *Herald* declared it could get tidings from Europe in fifteen days, but there is little now to indicate that this was anything more

than a boast, for without the transatlantic cable and with steam navigation still in its infancy it must have required a favorable combination of circumstances to fulfill the claim. At the same time the paper insisted that it could get news from Boston in forty-eight hours, from Rochester in twenty-four, and from Buffalo in twelve.

It is to be remembered that George Washington had been buried before New York knew of his death, and that the Battle of New Orleans occurred two weeks after the end of the War of 1812 had been declared. This slowness of communication, a cross which the early editors had to bear, became a tragedy in the case of the men who lost their lives in front of Andrew Jackson's cotton ramparts.

One of the most stirring chapters in the history of news-gathering in America is that relating to the rivalry among New York daily papers in pre-cable days as they strove to outdo each other in getting word from Europe. The reports came, of course, by ship, to be picked up on arrival off shore and hurried by whatever facilities could be devised to the newspapers on Manhattan.

This costly competition led finally to the organization of the New York Associated Press, the first step toward the great Associated Press which today serves its newspaper clients and the public in every section of the country. This rivalry on the waterfront was in full play when the first issue of the *Plain Dealer* made its appearance.

No Cleveland paper of that day could afford the expense of maintaining a carrier-pigeon service for the reporting of news, as some of the Eastern papers were doing. Neither could they indulge in the New York luxury of running pony expresses.

Their surest means of communication was by lake vessels, but this, of course, ceased functioning when the navigation season closed. As early as 1830 there was a daily line from Buffalo to Detroit, with a stop at Cleveland. This kept the *Plain Dealer* and its competitors in touch, though somewhat be-

latedly, with news occurrences east and west. Between seasons of navigation, however, news came principally by stagecoach traveling over uncertain roads, or did not come at all.

These pioneer editors perforce depended to a large extent on their exchanges for information of what went on in the world. The nearer these sources were to the Eastern seaboard and to Washington, the more in demand they were among the Middle Western papers. By the same logic Cleveland papers were in constant and increasing demand farther west as exchanges. So popular were they in this role that all the Cleveland papers were forced finally to reduce the number of free exchanges they would permit.

The New York *Sun* is credited with originating the idea that local news had reader value. The common assumption had been that any occurrence which the community would know about anyway need not be reported. But part of the *Sun's* news creed may have owed its origin to the fact that anything except local news was difficult to get.

In Cleveland the "local column" did not appear until 1851, and the *Plain Dealer* later claimed credit for having the first one in Cleveland.¹ This feature was in the years ahead to engage some of the brightest lights in the local field, including for the *Plain Dealer* Artemus Ward, James D. Cleveland, and A. M. Griswold.

At the period of the *Plain Dealer's* birth, however, all the editorial emphasis was put on news of a kind now considered important, perhaps, but dull: presidential messages, routine performances of Congress, dynastic developments in Europe, and, inevitably, the doings of the big party figures. The *Plain Dealer* inherited this tradition, and freed itself of it only when the general trend in newspaper-making pointed to the new day.

Two days after the launching of the evening edition, J. W. Gray registered an editorial complaint characteristic of pre-telegraph days:

¹ November 5, 1852.

TAXING PATIENCE

We have not had an eastern mail since the commencement of our daily paper. This is taxing genius as well as patience. Uncle Sam must have a very queer notion of western editors to suppose they can make a newspaper without news.²

The same complaint had been expressed by the *Herald* before the *Plain Dealer* made its appearance:

Should any reader inquire, "What has the editor been about today?" his answer is, overhauling bushels of old exchanges brought up by the boats, in search of news. Did you ever look for a needle in a haystack? ³

Another paragraph from the *Herald*, this of a later date, throws light on the editorial embarrassment:

Thanks to Capt. Kelsey of the Chesapeake for a bundle of late eastern, Mr. Vredenburg of the Wells Co. Express for later southern, the Empire for Detroit papers and Mr. Robinson of the Buffalo Pilot office for that journal of yesterday morning.⁴

The comment is characteristic of the day. Many similar expressions of appreciation are to be found in the columns of all the Cleveland papers at this period. The editors were, indeed, dependent on the goodwill and the co-operation of their friends.

The *Plain Dealer* protests that stagecoach-drivers arriving from the East insist on delivering passengers and baggage before unloading their mail. This, the editor remarked, delays publication and often makes it impossible to print important news till the next day. Gray threatens to take the complaint to Washington unless the drivers change their habits.⁵

"The mails are at fault," declared the *Herald* on another occasion. "The Southern last night brought no papers from Cincinnati or Columbus — the Buffalo brought none from that

² April 9, 1845.

³ November 18, 1841.

⁴ June 2, 1846.

⁵ August 15, 1846.

quarter — the Pittsburgh nothing beyond that city — and the western never brings any news nohow. ‘Poor picking,’ as the newspaper beggars say to our exchange table.”⁶

Later in the year the *Herald and Gazette* boasted of the “extraordinary dispatch” which it had shown in getting President Tyler’s annual message to its readers. It was delivered to Congress Tuesday noon, set up en route in the office of the *Daily American* at Pittsburgh, and received by the *Herald and Gazette* at ten thirty Friday evening.

The annual message of the President to Congress was considered news of prime importance, and sometimes it practically monopolized the scant space the editor had available for news. On the Western Reserve competition ran high for the credit of getting these state papers first. It was found that if the message coming by stage mail could somehow be intercepted, at Ravenna or Hudson, for instance, and brought the remaining distance to Cleveland by horse and buggy or by a messenger on horseback, considerable time could be saved.

Thus, while the stage lumbered on its slow way toward the city, making its stops at every town and hamlet along the route, the messenger, inspired by knowledge of print-shop deadlines, could avoid delays and leave the public conveyance far behind. The modern idea of speed in the carrying and delivery of mail had not yet taken possession of the Post Office Department at Washington.

In one instance this rivalry between the *Plain Dealer* and the *Herald* led to a situation embarrassing to one editor and immensely amusing to the other. Gray accused Josiah A. Harris of the *Herald* of driving to Ravenna with a mail pouch key in one pocket and a rat-tail file in the other. The key, he said, had been given Harris by Postmaster Spencer for use in opening a pouch and extracting a copy of President Polk’s message. The file, according to Gray, was to force the lock if the key didn’t fit!

Harris, it was said, got the message and was driving back

⁶ January 13, 1841.

toward Cleveland when he was overtaken by a friend of Gray⁷ with a speedier span of horses and halted. He told the *Herald* man that unless he would agree to share the fruit of his enterprise with the *Plain Dealer*, the tables would be turned and Gray would get the message first. Harris, according to the story, capitulated at once and, to Gray's immense surprise, delivered to him personally a copy of the presidential communication.

Harris admitted enough of the story to make it meat for Gray's caustic pen. The day after the *Plain Dealer's* gleeful publication of the rat-tail file story,⁸ the *Herald* admitted that its editor had indeed got the key for use at the Ravenna post-office from the chief clerk of the Cleveland office. Harris said he knew of no regulation touching the matter. As for the rat-tail file or any other file intended to force a lock on one of Uncle Sam's mail bags, that part of the story, he insisted, merely grew out of Gray's spiteful imagination.

Many times thereafter the *Plain Dealer* returned to the theme of the file. Whether true or not — and it was probably not — the picture of the highly respectable Harris stooping to force a mail pouch lock was too good to abandon.

In the scant correspondence of Gray now available for local research is a letter from the editor to the postmaster at Hudson. Gray is anxious to "beat the Herald" on the President's message. "An express from Hudson here," he wrote, "would come in advance of the mail some three hours & I have thought if it came to you or any of your neighbors it might be taken by a Post rider immediately upon the opening of your mail and brot to me at least in time to set it up before the Herald."

News-gathering was thus a highly competitive enterprise, where the demand outstripped the supply, and the rival editors overlooked little in their efforts to win. In 1847 the *Plain Dealer* told the story of a *Herald* man's "perfidy" in stealing papers

⁷ This friend, wrote W. Scott Robison in the *Plain Dealer* many years later (October 17, 1900) was "a Mr. Collins of Ravenna."

⁸ December 11, 1845.

intended for Gray's use.⁹ Nicholas Bartlett of the *Plain Dealer* staff was in Buffalo, bought copies of local papers, and sent them to Cleveland in care of a steamboat captain. On arrival of the boat at Cleveland a man representing himself as friendly to the *Plain Dealer* volunteered to deliver the papers to Gray. Instead he took them to the *Herald*, and the *Herald* got on the street the important news they contained before the *Plain Dealer* even heard of it.

Much of the legendary animosity shown against an editor in the office of postmaster by his local competitors was based on their complaint that he was unfair in handling their mail, and particularly their newspaper exchanges. The *Herald* and *Leader* fought Postmaster Gray; the *Plain Dealer* and *Herald* fought Postmaster Cowles; the *Plain Dealer* and *Leader* fought Postmaster Benedict. The ritual was fixed.

The difficulty of news transmission in the early days made it necessary for papers situated like those in Cleveland to maintain corps of special correspondents scattered among important news sources which, in review, seem out of proportion to the general smallness of their enterprises. The first task of Gray at the launching of the daily was to secure correspondents who were expected to do the best they could in getting their reports to the home office.

By the fall of 1845 the *Plain Dealer* was ready to announce that it had regular correspondents at New York, New Orleans, St. Louis, and Cincinnati.¹⁰ Later announcements were of the appointment of correspondents at Washington¹¹ and Columbus.¹² The former had for a long time been representing the *New York Evening Post* at the national capital.

The coming of the railroads contributed greatly to a solution of the problem of news transmission. It did not, however, pro-

⁹ June 19 and 20.

¹⁰ September 3.

¹¹ November 26, 1845.

¹² November 29, 1845.

vide the whole answer. That answer awaited the arrival of the telegraph, and even then was slow in coming.

The *Plain Dealer* and telegraphy came into existence almost simultaneously, though several years were to elapse before the paper got any advantage of it. In 1842, the *Plain Dealer's* birth year, the first proposal was made in Congress that the federal government appropriate money to give the Morse invention a practical test. The amount was thirty thousand dollars. In February and March 1843 the bill was enacted. In May 1844, a few months before the appearance of the daily *Plain Dealer*, there flashed from Washington to Baltimore the historic query: "What hath God wrought?" The telegraph had proved its possibilities.

But not till 1847 did the wires reach Cleveland. In that year the city council authorized the Lake Erie Telegraph Company to run its wires into the city and on September 15 the first telegraph office was opened. The wires had reached Buffalo in 1845 and one year later Pittsburgh was linked into the rapidly expanding net work of communication. Cleveland and Cincinnati came into it two years behind Buffalo. By 1851 there were more than fifty different telegraph companies in operation in the United States, each serving a particular region. Out of them finally in 1856 emerged the Western Union.

The Cleveland papers, however, had not waited for the opening of the Cleveland telegraph office before making use of the new agency. As soon as the wires reached Buffalo they arranged to have news from the East telegraphed to that point, whence by whatever means could be devised it was brought on to Cleveland. This arrangement was reflected immediately in an improvement in the Cleveland papers, so far as freshness of news was concerned. That the plan was not entirely satisfactory, however, is indicated by this statement from the *Herald*:

The proprietors of the press in this city have unitedly withdrawn from using the magnetic telegraph as a medium of receiving news until it shall be completed to New York. They have been using it for

a month and without satisfactory benefit to their interests, owing to the fact that our reports have been meagre and unsatisfactory to ourselves and our readers, and this event attended with an expense that has not and, we fear, cannot be met by any return.¹³

This boycott of the wires was shortlived, however. The proprietors could not afford to ignore such an agency of quick communication, even if the nearest receiving office was two hundred miles away.

By 1854 the announcement was made that the three papers, the *Plain Dealer*, the *Herald*, and the *Leader*, had contracted with the newly formed New York Associated Press. Cleveland would now get its news simultaneously with New York.¹⁴ That coming from Europe by ship would be sent immediately on arrival, and all reports would be more complete than theretofore.

Still seven years away was the completion of the first trans-continental telegraph line, when the East and West met at Salt Lake City. "The telegraph spans the continent," said the *Plain Dealer* in 1861, quoting the message sent by Brigham Young to J. H. Wade of Cleveland, president of the Pacific Telegraph Company: "Utah has not seceded, but is formed for the constitution and laws of our once happy country."¹⁵

Two years later, after Gray's death, the *Plain Dealer* suggested that the raid of the Confederate Morgan into Ohio might have succeeded "if it had not been for the telegraph. The lightning dogged his steps; it outran his jaded steeds; it put swift riders on his trail, gunboats up the river and armed men in his front; it encompassed him with the yeomanry of Ohio and stripped him of men, cannon and steeds. Let us salute the telegraph!"¹⁶

How much more willing to salute the telegraph the editor would have been could he have foreseen the transmission of

¹³ August 5, 1846.

¹⁴ *Herald*, November 4, 1854.

¹⁵ October 18.

¹⁶ July 23, 1863.

pictures by wire, which would with the years become part of the routine of newspaper-making!

In the summer of 1902 a local news item in the *Plain Dealer* contained this opening paragraph:

The sending of pictures from one city to another by means of a telegraph wire and current of electricity was shown yesterday to be feasible by practical experiments held in this city.¹⁷

For hours, the reporter related, wire pictures "sped back and forth" between the *Plain Dealer* office and the Chamber of Commerce. Pictures of Harvey D. Goulder, Tom L. Johnson, and John D. Rockefeller were printed on the first page to indicate the results of the new enterprise.

More than thirty years were to pass, however, before the wirephoto process would be perfected and the Associated Press could send across the continent today's picture to illustrate today's news. Between the two dates lay a ceaseless struggle to make practical the dream of hitching the camera to the galloping steeds of journalism.

The difficulty experienced by the early Cleveland publishers in getting news for prompt publication in pre-railroad, pre-telegraph days was, of course, common to all pioneer newspaper-makers. It was given special emphasis here because of the distance from the chief news-producing sources like Washington and the Atlantic seaboard. Between the present newspaper necessity of daily discarding scores of columns of news reports unusable because of space limitations, and the necessity of a century ago of scratching for the little copy needed to meet scant requirements, lies a vast difference which marks not only the march of time but the advance in technological perfection which at so many points touches the problem of twentieth-century publication.

Editorial zeal, however, remains unchanged. Editor Gray sought the best by the means at hand. His successors could not be excused for doing less.

¹⁷ July 2.

CHAPTER IX

“ ESTEEMED CONTEMPORARIES ”

These editors were a jolly band of blackguards in their references to one another. Understandable superlatives punctuated their rhetoric.

“ THERE is a line in moral prostitution beyond which no example can be contagious. The Plain Dealer editor has passed that line. . . . ”¹

Forthright and unequivocal was the *Cleveland Leader's* opinion of Editor Gray of the *Plain Dealer* in the days when the *Leader* was still considered a newcomer in Cleveland and Gray was nearing the end of his active career. And it may be said, in all candor, that the *Plain Dealer's* opinion of the *Leader's* editor was rhetorically similar to the *Leader's* estimate of Gray.

No change the century has wrought in the picture of newspaper publication — and changes are, of course, innumerable and vitally important — is perhaps more striking than that in the editorial attitude toward one's journalistic brothers down the street. Early nineteenth-century editors were experts in the art of hurling epithets, particularly at one another. Were one now to accept the appraisal of their journalistic contemporaries, the *Plain Dealer* was edited in its early years by an unprincipled blackguard, the *Herald* by men utterly lost to any sense

¹ April 14, 1856.

of decency, and the *Leader* by one known far and wide as an unmitigated liar.

It was a custom of the time when party spirit ran high. The editor was almost of necessity a political leader and spokesman, and newspaper readers were supposedly much amused when the proprietor found himself with ink on his shirt front as well as on his presses. In no sense peculiar to Cleveland was this habit of editors' abusing each other. It was characteristic not of Cleveland or the Western Reserve, but of the times.

Much has been written of the part newspapers have had in building up their communities, the improvements they have brought about; the rascality they have exposed, the political offices to which their editors have sometimes climbed. All this is familiar. There is also this outer side of the early editor's daily life. Just how much esteemed was the "esteemed contemporary"?

An Associated Press dispatch from Berlin not long ago reported that two German editors had been fined seventy-two dollars each for accusing a fellow editor of "abominable thoughtlessness and shocking untruthfulness." Such frivolous criticism as that would in other days have been answered here in kind, and not with a summons. Only on rare occasions was there in Cleveland an editorial resort to the law, and then the man who made the complaint usually had his trouble for his pains.

Concerning Gray of the *Plain Dealer*, the *Leader* had this to say in 1856:

As a warning to any who may wish to emulate this embodiment of cardinal sin we shall drag him forth from his hiding place and exhibit him as showmen exhibit venomous reptiles — so safely secured that even the timid need not fear to approach and look upon the most marvelous compound of all that is ludicrous and wicked, presumptuous and weak, hateful and pitiable, that was ever presented to their gaze. . . . All those weapons which constitute the natural defence of the base and cowardly — circumstantial falsehood, defiant airs, crouching submission, pertinacity, forgery, per-

jury — are as familiar to Joseph W. Gray as beads are to a monk or the spots on cards to a gambler. . . .²

And so on, for a column or so. Comes the afternoon of the same day. The *Plain Dealer* replies, branding the *Leader's* eminent editor “ a catiff wretch . . . one of the most base and infamous of creatures who, wearing the garb of a human, has nearly all the elements of a demon. . . . A fellow whose fruitful brain can produce a whole catacomb of lies in one single night resembles so much the prince of the regions of Pluto that if he be not his Satanic Majesty in person, he is worse still, being one of his dastardly and treacherous imps. . . . ”

It was just a matter of routine for Gray to read in the *Cleveland Times* in 1847 that he was a “ lying bank pimp — a liar both by instinct and choice.”³

The *Plain Dealer* ignored the attack this time. Gray probably felt that he couldn't be bothered! Or he may have thought that this custom of hurling invectives was already getting old, for as far back as 1837, before either the *Times* or the *Plain Dealer* had appeared, the *Gazette* was accusing the editor of the *Advertiser* of “ low-lived scurrility ” and of acting as mouthpiece of “ the contemptible and office-hungry puppies with whom he herds.”⁴

It was one of the Mores of the period, justifying the non-chalance of the editor of the *True Democrat*, when the *Plain Dealer* declared that his conduct “ convinces people that he is not only a lying blackguard at heart, but is wanting sense to conceal the degrading weakness.”⁵ On another occasion the *Plain Dealer* had said the *True Democrat* “ lied like an epitaph.”⁶

Answering a statement by an even more eminent contemporary, the *Plain Dealer* — now under the editorship of Stephenson — declared that “ the Cleveland Herald has put the cap

² April 11.

⁵ August 8, 1849.

³ September 8.

⁶ July 17, 1847.

⁴ March 11.

sheaf on the abominable record it has made for itself for cant, hypocrisy, phariseeism and falsehood.”⁷

Not all the editorial missiles flying at the head of the *Herald* editor, however, came from across the party fence. Sometimes they originated on the *Herald's* own side.

The *Forest City Democrat* condescendingly remarked of the *Herald*: “We can pity the follies of virtuous dotage; but imbecility united with falsehood excites only our contempt!”⁸

The *Leader* used more detail:

“Old Granny” Herald is getting to be quite cross and ugly lately. Its fangs are all extracted, not a tooth has it got left; it simply munches the little morsel a benevolent public gives it. It reminds us of an old superannuate who has been reduced to skin and bones.⁹

Occasionally a shell from some distant Big Bertha would come screaming through the air to land on lower Superior Street. “Western editors,” declared Editor Bennett of the *New York Herald*, inspired by some now forgotten incident, “are all whiskey bottles, their reporters are bottles of whiskey and their papers have all the fumes of that beverage without any of its strength.”¹⁰

Abhorring generalities, the *Leader* was inclined to particularize, insisting that “about 90 per cent of all the whiskey, gin, brandy, rum and other alcoholic liquor in this country are consumed by Democrats.”¹¹

This was intended as a flank attack on the old enemy, the *Plain Dealer*. Not often, however, was the assault so indirect.

“The editor of the *Leader*,” the *Plain Dealer* insisted, “is the original ass that Balaam mounted.”¹² Years earlier, using the barnyard for inspiration, the *Plain Dealer* had declared that

⁷ September 23, 1863.

⁸ February 8, 1854.

⁹ June 28, 1859.

¹⁰ Quoted in the *Leader*, July 11, 1864.

¹¹ September 12, 1880.

¹² April 13, 1880.

“ the maudlin twaddle of our neigher (The Leader) reminds us of the sickly braying of a superannuated ass.”¹³

The simile indeed seems enticing. Thus the *Plain Dealer*: “ The Leader has a sharp correspondent in Columbus. He signs himself S. S. Sly dog! He thinks by leaving the A off, he won’t be known.”¹⁴

The *Plain Dealer*, the *Leader* announced, “ can crowd about as many brazen falsehoods into the space of an ordinary newspaper column as there are hairs on a good-sized dog.”¹⁵

“ The Leader,” declared the *Plain Dealer*, “ is a reckless liar, a venomous slanderer, a selfish bloodsucker, a damage to the city and a disgrace to journalism.”¹⁶

The *Times* came to the defense of Postmaster Spencer, then under attack by the *Plain Dealer*:

We cherish no unkind feelings of resentment toward the nominal editor of the *Plain Dealer*; but would, on the contrary, rejoice over the faintest gleam of hope that he could ever rise from the depths of moral and political degradation into which he has fallen. But, alas! for human nature. We would as soon think of groping for roses and mignonette amid the snows of December as to expect the semblance of magnanimity or of generous honor from a man upon whose brow is written “ SCOUNDREL ” as unmistakably legible as the brand of God upon the forehead of Cain.¹⁷

Occasionally, it appears, one editor or another would roll up his sleeves, sharpen half a dozen pencils, draw a deep breath and really go to town astride his good steed Invective. Here is an editorial from the *Plain Dealer*:

THE HERALD AND ITS LIES

For a cool, deliberate, downright lie commend us to the Herald. Our other neighbors may prevaricate — step mincingly round a lie

¹³ February 20, 1863.

¹⁴ March 8, 1862.

¹⁵ May 8, 1885.

¹⁶ March 22, 1888.

¹⁷ March 31, 1847.

— perhaps tell a white lie (as Mrs. Opie¹⁸ calls it) — misrepresent — mangle and mutilate facts — twist and squirm like a small pattern of eels — but they “pale their ineffectual fire” before the blazing brightness of the Herald man — who appears to be the eldest and favorite son of the “father of lies.” In the first place, our other neighbors haven’t had the Herald’s experience. The Herald has been lying now for nearly twenty years. The paper of last evening reached the 240th number of the 19th volume. Then again, the Herald has a *genius* for lying — a real, inborn, devil-descended genius for it that can’t be acquired even by twenty years of your mere stupid, plodding perseverance. The Herald is among liars what Michael Angelo is among sculptors, Titian or Rubens among painters, a full-grown Shanghai among common chickens or Dick Turpin among highwaymen. It achieves its loftiest lies under an inspiration — a divine afflatus. Your mere mechanical liar can never hope to equal them. Let him try his hand at a *Paradise Lost* or a *Venus de Medici* or “Death on a Pale Horse” or something else more within the range of his powers. Give up all hope, young enthusiast, of rivalling the *Herald*! You will only grow old and gray-headed in the attempt and still at the close of life when your last lie is told the Herald looms far above your lowly plain, an inaccessible Himalaya of lying. . . .¹⁹

In the campaign of 1856, when the new Republican Party was still trying its wings and party animosities ran deep in the Western Reserve, one Ossian E. Dodge²⁰ traveled the local circuit of the Frémont political rallies, singing a song which the *Leader* took pleasure in printing.²¹ The substance of its several stanzas was that the Devil, wanting someone of earth to do his dirty work, looked over the field of possibilities and chose J. W. Gray as his lieutenant in sin.

¹⁸ Amelia Opie (1769–1853) was an English novelist, poet, and moralist who lived at Norwich and wrote for London magazines.

¹⁹ October 6, 1853.

²⁰ Ossian E. Dodge was famed as a Whig song-campaigner. He organized a singing troupe which toured the United States. He established a music store in Cleveland. He was born at Cayuga, New York, in 1820 and died in London in 1876.

²¹ October 29, 1856.

The chorus ran thus:

So Gray may spread himself and write
And pull the devil's wires,
For he can boast by legal right
Of being prince of liars.

When, by appointment of Lincoln, Editor Cowles of the *Leader* became postmaster of Cleveland, the *Plain Dealer* expressed much the same opinion of the President's choice as other Cleveland papers had voiced of Gray's selection to the same office eight years earlier.

The contest for the office had been between Cowles and Editor Benedict of the *Herald*. Of the Cowles appointment the *Plain Dealer* said:

To select so obnoxious an individual personally on the score of being a ruffian Republican is more than even Clevelanders can bear. The appointment of Cowles, personally unfit, simply because connected with a sheet owned and used by the irrepressibles to slaughter the conservatives and put down the liberal sentiments of the party looks so much like “ rule or ruin ” that the masses are indignant.²²

Perhaps Cowles had the indictment due him, for not long before, the *Leader* had this to say of Gray:

If we felt inclined to say what kind of statue we should set up to represent vice, immorality and the sum of all human villainies, like for instance the *one-eyed monster* we read of in the story of Sinbad the Sailor, we should say that we would take Gray just as nature made him, paint him black as his reputation and then stick him up in front of the *Plaindealer* office as an advertisement of that concern and to denote the headquarters of the bogus lottery swindlers located in his building.²³

²² March 10, 1861.

²³ June 14, 1858. This was a blow below the belt, for three months before this editorial was printed Gray had had an eye shot out in an accident which marked the beginning of the end of his active career.

So back and forth the battle raged. On occasion abuse would give way to good-natured kidding. The *Plain Dealer* insisted that Cowles went to Europe at the beginning of the Civil War in order to escape military service and, finding it impossible to stay away long enough, on his return had his teeth pulled to disqualify him from soldiering.²⁴

The first Sunday paper in Cleveland was the *Voice*, which, starting in 1871, continued in existence twenty-seven years. In 1877 the *Leader* and the *Herald* entered the Sunday field and the event caused a stir in local church circles. Ministers berated publishers who chose thus to desecrate the Sabbath. This was a fresh opportunity for the *Plain Dealer* to belabor its competitors. The Sunday *Plain Dealer* was not to appear till 1885.

The *Plain Dealer* — now controlled by Armstrong — printed a first-page cartoon captioned “Two Wicked Editors,” representing the devil whispering in Cowles’s ear his directions for the next Sunday issue, while the *Herald* editor stood by shamefacedly awaiting his turn for instructions.²⁵

Modestly the *Plain Dealer* said of itself that it “is the only truly good paper in the city. It does not print on the Sabbath day. Christian families cannot well do without it. Piety and the Plain Dealer walk hand in hand.”²⁶

The Presbyterian Union of Cleveland adopted resolutions condemning Sunday papers “both as news and advertising mediums.” “We may add,” remarked the *Plain Dealer*, “that nothing has ever given us so much pain as the sight of Mr. Cowles arrayed against the great moral element in this community.”²⁷

A few years later, after the Sunday *Plain Dealer* itself had been in the field a short time, it published a Sunday evening extra with the result of a much-advertised prize fight. The

²⁴ June 15, 1887.

²⁵ June 9, 1877.

²⁶ June 4, 1877.

²⁷ February 3, 1880.

Leader protested against the desecration. The *Plain Dealer* replied:

The sanctimonious old granny of the Cleveland *Leader* raises up her withered hands and turns up the whites of her blinking old eyes in pious horror at the wickedness of the PLAIN DEALER in publishing an extra edition for the account of the Dempsey-LeBlanche prize fight. It would never think of doing so shocking a thing! Oh, no, never! never! never! ²⁸

Readers, of course, recognized that at least half of this ebb and flow of vituperation was written with fingers crossed. For years Gray of the *Plain Dealer* had heaped frequent abuse on Harris of the *Herald*. Finally announcement was made one day that Harris was leaving the *Herald*, nothing being said as to what new connection he would make or what new line of activity he would undertake. The vinegar in Gray's inkwell turned instantly to liquid honey:

We recognize in him [Harris] a gentleman who has honored the profession he has left and we hope his acknowledged industry, economy and known integrity in the life he has so long devoted to the public good has secured to him a competency which in his declining days he needs and so worthily merits.²⁹

Alas! Harris had left the *Herald* to become editor of the *Leader*! Was ever a kindly instinct more cruelly rebuffed! If Gray had ever spoken more bitterly against any newspaper and its editor than he had against the *Herald* and Harris it was against the *Leader* and whatever man occupied its editorial chair. Many a laugh in town was born of the *Plain Dealer's* unintended cordial endorsement of a *Leader* editor.

While Cowles was in the East, some understudy reprinted a paragraph from the *Cincinnati Enquirer* relating to Armstrong of the *Plain Dealer*. Cowles wrote Armstrong a personal note regretting that the *Leader* had made the reprint. To show his

²⁸ March 16, 1886.

²⁹ January 6, 1858.

contempt for the attack, Armstrong then copied the supposedly offending paragraph in the *Plain Dealer*:

When the snarling, ill-conditioned editor of the Cleveland Plain Dealer gets drunk and falls out of the third story window of his boarding house, people in the street who catch a glimpse of his florid face and sanguinary hair cry out: "Behold, that blazing meteor!" They afterward gather up the quivering, glutinous, odorous mass on the pavement, sweep it up and carry it into the house and put it to bed.³⁰

So disturbed was the *Leader* by the moral and political conduct of the *Plain Dealer* under Armstrong that it forgot the terrific imprecations it had heaped on the paper as it had been conducted by Gray. Fourteen years after Gray's death it was moved to remark: "The bones of J. W. Gray must rattle in their grave over such prostitution of the paper that he once edited."³¹

So the public is let into the secret it probably knew already, that the early Cleveland editors — like early newspaper editors in other small cities — really felt much less moral indignation against their local contemporaries than their printed diatribes would indicate. Only occasionally, as for instance when Coon of the *Herald* physically assaulted Gray on the street, were these hostilities anything more than rough persiflage staged for the amusement of readers, who doubtless got many a hearty guffaw as they perused their favorite papers.

It seems now to have been rather crude and questionable horseplay. It is, however, part of the picture which some moderns like to label the good old days in American journalism.

³⁰ August 9, 1876.

³¹ October 7, 1876.

CHAPTER X

THE EDITOR FIGHTS A PRESIDENT AND LOSES AN OFFICE

The Plain Dealer chooses to go with Douglas on the Lecompton issue, and the editor loses his postmastership. The National Democrat established to harass him.

"MR. DOUGLAS, I desire you to remember that no Democrat ever yet differed from an administration of his own choice without being crushed. Beware the fate of Tallmadge and Rives."¹

"Mr. President, I wish you to remember that General Jackson is dead."

It was a White House scene which would be remembered as politically historic. It paved the way for a dramatic episode of *Plain Dealer* history. A self-possessed, dignified, imperious chief executive, accustomed to having his own way, faced the outspoken defiance of his party's strongest character. Contrasting figures, this President from Pennsylvania and this Vermont-born Senator from Illinois; Buchanan with his more than six-foot stature; Douglas, the "Little Giant," with his scant five feet four inches of height; looking sternly into each other's eyes, trying to measure the depth of each other's purpose.

The issue between them was the Lecompton constitution re-

¹ Democratic senators whose careers were destroyed by their resistance to certain policies of Andrew Jackson.

cently adopted by the legislature of the territory of Kansas for submission to Congress. The date was 1857. Back of the issue lay the tragedy of "bleeding Kansas" and the whole tremendous issue of slavery in the territories. The Lecompton proposal was a pro-slavery pronouncement, designed to give slavery a foothold in a region it had not yet invaded.

Buchanan insisted that the procedure at Lecompton had been regular; that he was duty-bound to submit the constitution to Congress. Douglas, with most of the Democratic North, insisted the project was shot through and through with fraud. When the President demanded that support of Lecompton be made a test of party loyalty, the fiery little Senator rebelled.

Feeling between the two men had been growing in bitterness ever since Buchanan succeeded Pierce in the presidency. After this interview at the White House, the two were openly and outspokenly hostile.

J. W. Gray was postmaster of Cleveland by appointment of Pierce. By all political rules he was entitled to hold the office as long as Buchanan remained President. But when the party split on the issue of slavery extension, Gray could feel no hesitation as to which group was entitled to the *Plain Dealer's* whole-hearted support. Gray had been a friend and follower of Douglas from the beginning. At the moment his thinking on the subject of permitting slavery to spread into new areas was identical with that of Douglas. Gray had become increasingly critical of the Buchanan administration as it approached, unwittingly, the catastrophe of Civil War.

The *Plain Dealer* had advocated Douglas's nomination for president in 1856. Early that year it had noted the return of Buchanan from England and the general opinion that he was preparing to run for president.² It insisted that Buchanan would have to change the position he had taken in 1848 and get on the Popular Sovereignty platform if he hoped to win the nomination. For this, it said, is now "Democratic policy."

² January 31.

Within a few days Gray declared for Douglas.³ He would have been satisfied with a renomination of Pierce. Gray personally reported for his paper the Cincinnati convention, which rejected both Douglas and Pierce and named the only man ever to be elected President from Pennsylvania.

Though he had opposed Buchanan before the convention, Gray appeared ready to bury the hatchet after the nomination was made. Before most of the delegates had reached home the *Plain Dealer* said:

The nomination of James Buchanan is conceded by all parties to be equivalent of an election. . . . His past is so well known to his countrymen that not a hesitating doubt can enter the mind of a Democrat that his future course will be alike eminently useful and honorable to the country.⁴

Gray had become postmaster in April 1853. As soon as the quarters could be made ready, he moved the office from the *Herald* Building on Bank Street (West 6th) to Water Street (West 9th) near the corner of St. Clair. This seems now of course an absurdly out-of-the-way location. Gray's critics declared it to be so then, even though the center of the business life of the city was near the foot of Superior Street.

Douglas never recovered from his disappointment that Buchanan rather than he was made the Cincinnati nominee in 1856. The more evident became his lack of sympathy with the course of affairs at Washington, the more difficult it became for Gray — whom the *Leader* called "the Little Giant's pet dwarf" — to maintain both his party regularity and his personal loyalties.

As early as 1855 the *Leader* insisted:

The truth is that the editor of the *Plain Dealer* in his innermost heart despises Pierce . . . but if he were to express his honest convictions a certain postmaster might be removed from office without much ceremony.⁵

³ February 5, 1856.

⁴ June 6, 1856.

⁵ October 9.

Up to this time, however, there is nothing in the record to indicate that Gray was doing otherwise than playing the game as a good and regular Democrat.

Near the end of 1857 the *Plain Dealer* paid a duty tribute to the administration:

So far no administration during the first quarter of its existence has won more popular respect than that of Mr. Buchanan. . . . On the Kansas question Mr. Buchanan declares he stands on the principle of the Nebraska bill. So do we. He regrets the Lecompton convention did not submit the whole of their constitution to the people — so do we. He desires a speedy settlement of this Kansas matter in a way to do the least violence to acknowledged Democratic principle and precedents. So do we. Douglas we know desires the same thing, and if the Republican party are now anxious for peace, as they say they are, and willing to submit the question of slavery to the people of the Territory, instead of forcing it on congress, the whole country can as easily become a unit upon this matter as upon the Mormon question.⁶

This was, of course, after the action at Lecompton, but before the issue had become strained. It ignored the growing feeling of hostility of Douglas toward the President. Always ready to put the worst interpretation on anything Gray did, the opposition press said he was more intent on keeping his federal office than on maintaining a political consistency.

Congress by a party vote and against the appeal of Douglas decided, on May 4, 1858, to admit Kansas as a state under the Lecompton constitution. But on August 2 the people of the territory refused to accept the gift of statehood on the terms the pro-slavery convention had set up.

At the beginning of the year the *Leader* observed:

The *Plain Dealer* man who has been as whist as an old rat in the immediate neighborhood of a regular "black and tan" rat-terrier ever since the rupture between Douglas and the administration has at length put his nose near enough the mouth of his hole to give a faint squeak. . . .⁷

⁶ December 18.

⁷ January 11, 1858.

One such "squeak" came a little later when the *Plain Dealer* remarked that "of the 170,000 Democrats in Ohio who voted for James Buchanan, 160,000 at least are opposed to the Le-compton constitution."⁸ Remembering the anti-slavery sentiment of this state, it is probable that this estimate was not inaccurate.

An incident, capitalized to Gray's great embarrassment, was the publication in the *Plain Dealer* of a letter to the editor from Philadelphia, signed "Cleveland." The letter embodied a bitter attack on James Buchanan, then recently Secretary of State in the Polk Cabinet. "I hate this sham statesman," the correspondent wrote, "who like a colossal huckster sits on top of the Alleghenies offering to sell Pennsylvania — to sell her future and her past — to South Carolina or the Devil for a chance in the presidential raffle."

The letter was printed in the *Plain Dealer* in the fall of 1851.⁹ No editorial attention was paid to it at the time. Certainly Gray did not repudiate its sentiments. Five years later, in the 1856 campaign, when the *Plain Dealer* was supporting Buchanan for president, the *Herald* dug the old "Cleveland" letter from the files and day after day reprinted the critical section of it, with the caption: "The Plain Dealer on Buchanan in 1851."

Gray protested the obvious unfairness of the attack. He said "Cleveland" was in reality George Lippard, a popular lecturer of Philadelphia who later came to Cleveland to edit and publish a temperance paper. Despite Gray's denials of responsibility, it cannot be doubted that the *Herald's* malicious use of the letter helped to build the anti-Buchanan majority in the Reserve. It certainly contributed to Buchanan's animosity toward the postmaster.

That Gray's loyalty to Douglas and to principle on the slavery question would cost him his office was by late 1857 becoming pretty apparent to the community.

⁸ March 6, 1858.

⁹ October 20.

The *Cleveland Herald* quoted the *New York Tribune* correspondent at Washington as saying that "Plain Dealer Gray is to be removed from the Cleveland postoffice, unless he resigns, for refusing to denounce Douglas."¹⁰

The *Leader*, paying the postmaster one of the few compliments ever to come from that quarter, declared:

We have no doubt that the president, in case he has not done so already, will require our postmaster-editor to oppose the Douglas movement on the Lecompton swindle, in consideration of his being retained in the Cleveland postoffice. This Mr. Gray, of course, will refuse to do. . . .¹¹

Only the *Cleveland Review* retained any doubt as to the outcome of the controversy. The *Review* questioned whether Buchanan would care to oust Gray and thus increase the party feeling against him in Ohio.¹²

"The real difficulty" with Gray, declared the *Leader*,

consists of the fact that President Buchanan has a tight rope with a running noose around his postmasterial gullet, and the moment he attempted to open his mouth upon the subject of the Lecompton swindle or the squatter sovereignty principle of his friend Douglas the former brought him up standing with a sharp pull of the rope, producing immediate silence and alarming distention of eyes and tongue, blackness in the face and all symptoms of incipient strangulation.¹³

While in these troublous days Gray showed no inclination to jeopardize his federal office unnecessarily, he did not propose to give anyone the false impression that he was trimming his sails to the winds of political expediency. Gray met the challenge of his enemies with this editorial:

¹⁰ January 16, 1858.

¹¹ January 18, 1858.

¹² January 25, 1858.

¹³ January 25, 1858.

A TELEGRAPHIC SLANDER

Not only individuals, newspapers and letter writers, but the telegraph, is busying itself about the Cleveland Post Office and the editor of this paper; as though no more interesting subject could be found in these days of "startling events." We are quite indifferent to any public use which can be made of our name, provided the truth shall be told of us. The Tribune's Washington correspondent is telegraphed by the N. Y. Associated Press as saying that "Gray, the Post Master at Cleveland is to be removed, *notwithstanding his caving in on Lecompton*." The readers of the Plain Dealer will know at once that the insinuation about "caving in" is simply silly slander got up to injure the reputation of the editor where his paper does not circulate. We are a member of the Associated Press, pay regularly our weekly assessments and have as good a right to use that mammoth machinery to misstate the position of Horace Greeley as he or his correspondent has ours. It is bad enough to be thus slandered, without being compelled to pay for and print the slander upon ourselves.¹⁴

In June the expected happened. The "guillotine" set up by Buchanan "for the decapitation of the refractory of his own party"¹⁵ — using words previously employed by the *Leader* — was a bit slow getting into operation, but its work was deadly. The *Plain Dealer's* own first announcement of Gray's dismissal came in this form:

CHANGE IN THE CLEVELAND POST OFFICE

The long mooted question of the removal of Mr. Gray from the Cleveland Post office has at last taken place and Mr. Harrington has been appointed. The recent calamity of Mr. Gray which has resulted in the complete loss of his right eye has so overwhelmed him and his family in grief and so prostrated him physically that he is still unable to read or write for his paper. The condition of his remaining eye is such as to require him to avoid as much as possible all mental excitement for the present and the public will have to wait his personal vindication in this matter until his health shall be so restored as to allow him to resume his pen.

The public, however, are already aware that Mr. Gray's removal

¹⁴ February 17, 1858.

¹⁵ December 12, 1857.

was occasioned by his having differed with the President on the Kansas question; in fact, *for doubting the immaculate conception of the Lecompton Constitution!*¹⁶ (Signed) Editor pro tem.

The *Leader* greeted the announcement with characteristic acidity: "A good administration of the Cleveland postoffice may soon be anticipated, a 'consummation devoutly wished for' by the people."¹⁷

The *Herald* declared the appointment had been given a "gentleman whose pecuniary responsibility is undoubted, whose integrity is unquestioned and whose aim will be to manage the office for the benefit of our citizens generally."¹⁸

Gray's removal attracted wide attention, though it was only one of many of the fruits of Buchanan's "guillotine." The *New York Tribune*, whose editor had sued Gray for libel the year before, noted the incident in these words:

Mr. J. W. Gray has been superseded as Postmaster at Cleveland, Ohio. He was to have had a new lease of the Post Office under Buchanan because of his zeal and activity in impeding the circulation and disparaging the influence of the Tribune; he has had the cup rudely dashed from his lips because he is a devoted personal and political friend of Douglas and could not swallow the Lecompton fraud. True, he said little against it; but his journal generally preserved a silence which did not imply consent and when it spoke its utterances were not music in the ears of Calhoun, Henderson, the Kickapoo and Oxford managers and their illustrious patron in the White House. So Gray's head is in the basket.

We are sorry for it. His successor will probably treat us better than Gray has done — he could hardly treat us worse — but we hate to see a man decapitated for speaking out his honest convictions. Gray might have done a dozen bad deeds without losing his office; but his manhood compelled him to do one good one and that proved fatal. Experience of freedom, we trust, will convince him that the loss of office is quite a subordinate calamity to the love of self-respect.¹⁹

¹⁶ June 15, 1858.

¹⁷ June 15, 1858.

¹⁸ June 14, 1858.

¹⁹ Quoted in the *Plain Dealer*, June 26, 1858.

It was a kind of half-measure tribute from an unexpected source, and the *Plain Dealer* acknowledged the favor. "The Horace Greeley of 1857 is not the Horace Greeley of '58," it remarked, "although his old drab coat and the shocking bad hat remain the same."

Gray himself, physically weakened and unable to give his paper much personal attention, long refrained from comment on his dismissal. In the fall of 1859, however, fighting broken health and a newspaper competition set up to ruin him, Gray took his pen in hand:

It is well known to the public that the editor of this paper was turned out of the postoffice at this place because he would not surrender his principles and sacrifice his friends to the Moloch of Lecomptonism. By denouncing Senator Douglas and ignoring Popular Sovereignty as laid down in the Cincinnati platform he could have retained his office, as others have done who pursued a like course. But he chose what he deemed the path of duty and the path of honor; and because, as an independent journalist, he would not bow the knee to Baal but stood by the people in defence of their popular rights he is beset with persecution as well as proscription, and the paid recipients of federal patronage are let loose upon him. It was not enough to remove him from an office to which fifteen years of unceasing and unrequited service for the party in this wilderness of Republican Whiggery had entitled him, but a conspiracy was set afoot to rob him of what little earthly gains his industry and economy have accumulated. A paper falsely entitled "*The National Democrat*" was published by federal officials expressly to oppose "*Douglas and Popular Sovereignty*" and by the use of federal patronage, through threats, bribes, menaces and misrepresentations break down this paper. There is no danger of any such result, and we only mention these facts to explain positions. . . .²⁰

The *National Democrat* had made its appearance at the beginning of the year. It represented a form of "conspiracy" calculated to punish Gray by depriving him of business.

The *Plain Dealer* accepted the challenge. On the day the new paper first appeared, Gray pointed out that the *Demo-*

²⁰ October 25, 1859.

crat "professes to be 'national, peace-loving and Democratic in its sentiments, and a help instead of a hurt to the cause of Democracy. As such we can cordially welcome it here, and can even go further and admire the boldness which in these days of death and famine among publishers generally induces to so daring and patriotic an experiment.'" ²¹

The fact was widely accepted that the *National Democrat* was established to support the Buchanan against the Douglas faction of the Democratic Party. A correspondent of the *New York Times* wrote from Toledo that Benjamin Harrington was named to succeed Gray as postmaster "on the condition that he would, in conjunction with the marshal for this district, start and keep afloat a newspaper to oppose Douglas and the Plain Dealer." ²²

The *National Democrat*, said William W. Armstrong years later, was "started by Postmaster Ben Harrington and United States Marshal Mat Johnson to break the Plain Dealer, and lasted about three years." ²³ Colonel Charles B. Flood, an experienced newspaper man, was editor. After the collapse of the *Democrat* Flood became Columbus correspondent of the *Plain Dealer*. In 1881 he was to return to Cleveland to edit another paper ²⁴ set up for the purpose of driving the *Plain Dealer* to the wall.

With the *National Democrat* supporting the Buchanan administration at every turn, the *Plain Dealer* — its editor now out of public office, a sick, disappointed man nearing the end of his career — stoutly clung to the cause of Douglas. Convinced that Douglas was "the choice of nine-tenths of the Democracy of the whole nation," ²⁵ Gray hoisted his name to the top of the editorial page as its candidate for president in 1860. ²⁶

²¹ January 3, 1859.

²² Quoted by the *Plain Dealer*, January 4, 1860.

²³ *Plain Dealer*, July 31, 1887.

²⁴ The *Daily Globe*, started in September 1881; suspended after one month.

²⁵ November 15, 1858.

²⁶ October 24, 1859.

Gray attended both the Charleston and the Baltimore conventions of the Democratic Party in that fateful year. His loyalty to Douglas burned with the flame of a lifelong personal and political attachment. In a dispatch to his paper from Baltimore the day before the convention met, he referred to "those political pukes from the North who, with administration bribes in their pockets, come here to oppose the known will of their constituents."²⁷

The *Plain Dealer*, of course, supported Douglas for president with all its old-time vigor. It expressed confidence in his election, though one must now question whether the editor really believed that the badly divided Democratic Party could stand up against the militant Republicans. Buchanan gave whatever strength he could muster to Breckenridge, candidate of the pro-slavery wing of the party.

With the election of Lincoln there began a new epoch in American political history. A new epoch was opening, too, in the career of the *Plain Dealer*.

The *Plain Dealer's* last fling at Buchanan came only a few weeks before Gray's death. It referred to the late Democratic President as "that imbecile old lady, James Buchanan."²⁸

²⁷ Dated at Baltimore, June 17, printed in the *Plain Dealer* June 20, 1860. Buchanan's own interpretation of events leading to the great split in his party was contained in a letter to Mrs. J. J. Roosevelt, dated February 14, 1863: "Had they [the Douglas Democrats] at Charleston simply consented to recognize the decision of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case the Democratic party would not have been divided. This was all on which the southern delegates insisted. . . ."

²⁸ March 4, 1862.

CHAPTER XI

SOME OF THE MEN WHO HELPED

Gray, always on the look-out for talent, gathered on the staff many who gave the paper character and standing in the community and state.

THOUGH his resources were limited and the *Plain Dealer* was a small enterprise, measured by the scale of the papers of his day with nation-wide circulation, J. W. Gray was always in the market for promising talent. His establishment became a sort of informal school of journalism for this part of the country. Gray liked young men and gave those he employed the largest possible measure of freedom and responsibility.

His associates thus formed a group famous in the community. Many of its members left their employment on the *Plain Dealer* for better-paying jobs on other newspapers; some entered other fields to win distinction.

Artemus Ward was, of course, a conspicuous example of the kind of talent Gray was always looking for; the kind which has originality, cleverness, and the ability to go on its own. Whatever else be said of the *Plain Dealer* under Gray, it was innocent of stodginess. Gray put fire into what he wrote, and he encouraged fire in what his colleagues and assistants did. Further, he gave them a maximum of freedom to follow their own devices. Dullness was the sin unforgivable; brightness and sparkle the goals to be sought.

There was George Hoyt, for instance, a contemporary of Artemus Ward and the only man of major importance on the *Plain Dealer* whose term of service touched all three periods of its history. Employed first by Gray, he served under Armstrong and remained for a short time after the Holden purchase.

Hoyt came to the *Plain Dealer* from Chardon in 1857 as a compositor, the same year that Artemus Ward came from Toledo to be Gray's "local" and commercial editor. Between the proprietor of the famous waxworks and the youth from Geauga there sprang up a comradeship which lasted as long as Artemus remained on the staff.

Handy with his pencil — a sort of amateur cartoonist, as he described himself — Hoyt did not long remain at the type-cases. He entered the mailing-room and soon afterward the editorial rooms. He became Artemus Ward's assistant in the gathering of local news and illustrated some of his early writings with sketches as whimsical as the text. The campaign poster Gray issued in 1860 and circulated in many states was Hoyt's handiwork. It is related that Hoyt drew illustrations for Artemus Ward's first book, but the drawings were lost on their way to the publishers in New York and were never reproduced.

Hoyt served at various times as local editor and associate editor, and when the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company was chartered in 1877 he became its vice president. In the fall of 1863 he was sent by Stephenson to report the dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery. With George A. Benedict of the *Cleveland Herald*, he stood but a few feet from Abraham Lincoln as the President delivered the now immortal Address. Said Benedict to Hoyt as the President finished: "George, he is the salt of the earth!"

After the ceremonies Hoyt, with many others, visited Lincoln and talked with him. Hoyt was not much impressed, as his report to the paper indicated.

As an associate editor under Stephenson in 1863, Hoyt finally left the paper to join the army. He took an editorial position

on the *Cincinnati Times* and returned to Cleveland in May 1865 to become local editor of the *Herald*.

When William W. Armstrong came into control of the *Plain Dealer*, however, he called Hoyt back and made him again assistant editor. He resigned as managing editor soon after the paper passed into the possession of Mr. Holden and his associates. At his death in 1909, the *Plain Dealer* said of him:

George Hoyt was an easy and graceful writer, a man of refined tastes and with a highly developed sense of humor and, while most of his journalistic work was prepared for the edification of a past generation, there are many Clevelanders who will recall his efforts to instruct and delight, and who will learn with regret that the hand and brain of the old journalist are forever stilled.¹

Perhaps the only daily newspaper columnist ever to become a bishop was William Edward McLaren, who came to the *Plain Dealer* as a reporter in 1851 after graduation from Jefferson College, Pennsylvania. He served as literary editor, city editor, and editorial writer and started a column of comment and humor which he captioned "Spice." He was, accordingly, known by many as "Mac, the spice man." When the *Forest City* in 1852 claimed to have established the original local column in Cleveland, the *Plain Dealer* challenged the statement and insisted McLaren had started the first.

At the end of 1852 McLaren went to Pittsburgh and worked first on the *Gazette* and later on the *Chronicle*, leaving the newspaper field finally to study for the ministry. Ordained as a Presbyterian minister in 1860, he was sent to Bogotá, Colombia, but failing health brought him back to the United States two years later. He left the Presbyterian for the Episcopal Church, became rector of Trinity in Cleveland, and in 1875 was chosen bishop of the diocese of Chicago. He died in 1905.

The *Plain Dealer* paid him this informal tribute:

To report the proceedings of a religious or scientific convention all day, write a witty criticism of old Booth and Hackett all the

¹ January 25.

evening and outstay the stars at a great conflagration the same night was better than food and raiment to Mac. He loved the business, and everybody loved him. . . .²

McLaren's successor — and Artemus Ward's immediate predecessor — was James D. Cleveland, who left politics for a *Plain Dealer* job with Gray and then left the editorship to accept a political appointment three years later. Born at Madison, New York, in 1822, he went to Cleveland the year the *Plain Dealer* made its appearance, studied law, and was elected clerk of the common pleas court. Defeated when he sought a second term, he accepted Gray's offer to succeed the future bishop as head of the local department.

Answering a "louder call," as Gray expressed it, Cleveland left the paper at the end of 1857 to become deputy clerk of the federal court in the regime of Judge Hiram V. Willson. Ten years later he was elected judge of the police court, retiring voluntarily after one term to practice law and engage in a successful career on the lecture platform. He died in 1899.

Gray regretfully bade his associate good-by:

Boy and man, we have known Mr. Cleveland intimately for fifteen years. He has during that time as correspondent, contributor or editor held confidential relations with the paper and is almost as much identified with it as the editor himself.

When Artemus Ward left the *Plain Dealer* for the trail which was to lead shortly to the editorship of *Vanity Fair* in New York, his place was taken by Alphonse Minor Griswold, known widely as the "Fat Contributor." Like his predecessor, he was much more interested in conducting a sparkling column of wit and humor than in collecting the routine news of a city.

Griswold was a graduate of Hamilton College and began his newspaper work on the *Buffalo Express*. In Cleveland he worked at various times for the *Plain Dealer*, the *National Dem-*

² April 10, 1869.

ocrat — established by Buchanan Democrats to ruin Gray by ruining his paper — and the *Leader*. He worked at Detroit and Cincinnati, lectured, and at his death in 1891 was editor and chief owner of *Texas Siftings*.

He was remembered for a long time in certain Cleveland circles for writing an elaborate report of a supposed inter-church conference on chewing gum. It was a masterpiece of reporting, but the participants in the imaginary session did not enjoy it.

Nicholas Bartlett used his experience with the editorial department of the *Plain Dealer* to help him up the ladder in railroading. Born at Waltham, Massachusetts, in 1822, he went to Cleveland in 1828 and by 1845 had become, according to an editorial announcement, an “authorized agent” to collect money due the paper. He became assistant editor in 1847 and for a time in the succeeding year carried the title of editor, though Gray’s control of the enterprise was unrelaxed. Gray called Bartlett a “strong reasoner and a chaste and elegant writer.”

He left the paper in 1850, engaged for a time in the manufacture of saleratus, and then became a clerk for the Cleveland, Painesville & Ashtabula Railroad, which was later absorbed into the Lake Shore system. In 1903 he celebrated the completion of fifty years with the old Lake Shore, his last position being that of local treasurer and assistant secretary. About one week after this observance Mr. Bartlett died.

Benjamin Franklin Peixotto³ served the *Plain Dealer* only a short time, but this brief career furnished material for columns of excited comment. He became associate editor, with James D. Cleveland, in January 1856, and for months his name was carried at the head of the column. Yet in 1877 the *Plain Dealer* declared that “Mr. Peixotto was never editorially connected

³ His father was Dr. Daniel Maduro Peixotto, New York City physician, called to the presidency of the Willoughby (Ohio) Medical College in 1836. Benjamin was born in New York on November 13, 1834.

with the *Plain Dealer*, although he did a long time ago contribute occasional articles, editorial, local and correspondence."

This unmerited repudiation was inspired by the discussion at Washington of Peixotto for an important consular appointment. "He was a Democrat then, the red-hottest kind of a Democrat," the *Plain Dealer* said, "and it would puzzle the astutest to discover why he has since changed his creed." He filled various consular offices in the Grant and Hayes administrations. When he was nominated for the post at Lyon in 1878, the *Herald* protested because he had opposed the re-election of Lincoln. The *Plain Dealer* protested because of his political apostasy.

In May 1856 the *Leader* criticized Gray because, it said, he blamed Peixotto for writing and printing political editorials without letting him see them. A poor excuse, the *Leader* insisted.

On his joining the *Plain Dealer*, the daily *Cleveland*⁴ paid him the compliment of saying he was "a writer of talent and a gentleman whose career, editorial and personal, will be guided by courtesy and kindness."

Though Peixotto's connection with the *Plain Dealer* was brief, the impression he made on the community as a leader and organizer among Jewish people, starting in Cleveland and extending throughout the United States, was a permanent contribution to the advancement of his co-religionists. He studied law, but found little time to practice it. He helped organize the first lodge of B'nai B'rith in Cleveland and at twenty-nine became national president of the organization. He was a moving spirit in the establishment of the B'nai B'rith Orphanage.

As consul at Bucharest, whither he was sent by appointment of Grant to represent America's protest against the Jewish massacres of 1870, the entire expense of his office was borne by

⁴ The *Cleveland* made its appearance October 1, 1855. The last issue was of November 18, 1856. It supported Fillmore, American candidate for president, in 1856. William J. May was editor.

contributions from American Jews, the consul himself serving without pay. Peixotto died in 1890.

"We cannot forbear," wrote Gray in 1856, "mentioning the material aid of H. M. Addison, Esq.,⁵ who fifteen years ago, with a cane, carpet bag and a clean collar traveled on foot through this Western Reserve in search of stray subscribers among a scattered Democracy and who paid for a night's lodging by playing his flute. . . ."

Addison lived on for many years, blessed for his good works. He tried newspaper publishing in the 1850's, being owner and proprietor of the *Cleveland Commercial*, but the venture was a failure. He is best remembered now as founder of the Fresh Air Camp for underprivileged children and for other useful civic activities.

Charles E. Kennedy wrote: "No Cleveland man I ever knew was thoroughly angelic, unless perhaps we make an exception of good old 'Father Addison.'"

Charles E. Wilson was business manager of the *Plain Dealer* toward the end of the Gray regime. He was a contemporary of Artemus Ward and his warm personal friend. Some of the humorist's best letters, written from New York in *Vanity Fair* days, were to Wilson, who, after leaving the paper, entered the insurance field at Hartford.

Another business-office subordinate of Gray was James Brokenshire, who remained with the paper into the Armstrong days. When the *Plain Dealer* moved from the corner of Superior and Vineyard Streets in 1869, leaving the building it had occupied since 1850, Brokenshire bought the old structure, razed it, and sold the site to the Bratenahls. They erected a new building, which bore their name and stood for many years.

⁵ Addison was born in Euclid, Ohio, November 21, 1818, and died January 14, 1898.

Only once in Gray's twenty years' control of the *Plain Dealer* did he share its ownership, and then but for a short period. For two years from May 1853 the paper was owned, nominally at least, by the new firm of Gray, Beardsley, Spear & Co. The partners were Irad L. Beardsley, a former editor of the *Herald* and a future librarian of the Cleveland Public Library, George Spear, Thomas A. Stow, and G. W. Hepburn, all *Plain Dealer* employees in one department or another. The plan did not work to Gray's satisfaction and was dissolved in 1855. Later Gray was to recall the time when he was "afflicted with several partners."

Two men identified with the paper, for the most part during the period between the death of J. W. Gray and the purchase of the property by William W. Armstrong, were George W. Johnson and William A. Collins. They served together as associate editors under Stephenson. Collins was active in Democratic politics. Johnson had been trained as a teacher and had a real taste for literature.

Collins left the *Plain Dealer* in the fall of 1864, intending to practice law in Cleveland. In the following March, however, he was announced as a co-purchaser of the *Pittsburgh Chronicle*.

Johnson is perhaps best remembered as author of the once popular song "When You and I Were Young, Maggie." He was a graduate of the University of Toronto, had a doctorate from Johns Hopkins, taught Latin at Cornell and at University College, Toronto. The "Maggie" poem first appeared in his book of verses called *Maple Leaves* and was dedicated to his future wife, Maggie Clark.

Soon after their marriage the Johnsons went to Cleveland and in 1864 he became associate editor of the *Plain Dealer*. In the following year, less than twelve months after their wedding, Mrs. Johnson died. At the beginning of 1866 Johnson left the paper to return to Canada. Later in the year he had the words of "Maggie" set to music by J. A. Butterfield of Detroit. Surviving his wife by more than half a century, Johnson died in

1917, a lifelong student and teacher of the classics.

Thomas A. Stow came to the *Plain Dealer* in 1851 as a compositor, soon became foreman of the shop, and spent most of the rest of his life with the paper in one capacity or another. He married a niece of Irad L. Beardsley, who outlived him many years and died in 1929 on the day before her ninety-sixth birthday.

Stow, like many of Gray's men, had a yen for politics. He was repeatedly a candidate for the legislature, but the majority habitually looked the other way. He was, however, a member of the Board of Education and a man guided by civic impulses. He was a second lieutenant in the Civil War. At his death in 1877, the editor called him "an honest, faithful and efficient worker in the *Plain Dealer*."

One did not have to be a member of the *Plain Dealer* staff, however, to enjoy Gray's confidence and the opportunity to make oneself felt as an influence in its publication. One summer Gray went up the lakes and left George F. Marshall in charge of the editorial page. Marshall was a frequent writer for the paper, a councilman and active citizen. A series of letters he wrote to the paper from Europe attracted much favorable attention.

On this occasion, as usual when Gray packed a grip and got away for a time, other local Democrats kept a fatherly eye on the office. Reuben Wood, future Governor, and Henry B. Payne, future United States Senator, dropped in one day to see what was going on. Marshall showed them the proof of a blistering editorial he had written in answer to a Medina judge who had criticized the paper. They finally dissuaded Marshall from printing his searing words.

Another non-journalistic friend on whom Gray often relied was John H. Sargent, school-teacher and engineer. He contributed articles of travel and admonition, and belonged to the

group of local Democrats who looked on the *Plain Dealer* as more or less their own possession, as it was their spokesman on matters political.

Sargent has been given credit for efforts which perhaps kept Cleveland in the race for big cityhood. By 1843 Sandusky had taken the lead in Ohio in railroad-building, having already two lines in operation, one of them being for horse-drawn cars, running to Tiffin. Sargent was appointed resident engineer on the project of reconstructing and extending this line.

Seeing the benefits certain to accrue to Sandusky from this enterprise and the advantages that city would gain over Cleveland, Sargent, at the solicitation of J. W. Gray, sent a communication to the *Plain Dealer*, illustrating it with maps, urging Cleveland to interest itself in a railroad to Columbus and Cincinnati. The suggestion bore fruit, and when the enterprise was finally approved, Sargent was called on to locate the line. He remained the road's engineer until it opened for business as far as Wellington.

Richard C. Parsons, a future editor and part owner of the *Herald*, a future Congressman and federal office-holder in Cleveland under a Republican Party yet unborn, was still another man Gray called on frequently for service to the paper. At one time he wrote a series of sketches of prominent men about town. One concerning Judge Samuel Starkweather offended the jurist. He wrathfully demanded the name of the author. Editor Cleveland told him that his understanding was that each sketch was written by the man it portrayed!

These men, of course, include only a few of those who helped J. W. Gray make the *Plain Dealer* a living, vibrant representative of a community feeling its first impulses to future greatness. Gray was always on the look-out for new ideas and was ready to give the men who had them opportunity to launch their little craft on the stream of public discussion.

CHAPTER XII

THE PLAIN DEALER LOSES ITS FOUNDER

Dying in June 1862, Gray is lost to his paper at a time when his services were most needed. Had he lived, the story of the next few years would have been quite different.

IN the living-room of a modest dwelling on Superior Street the family was gathered after supper to spend the evening together. It was the kind of occasion the father particularly enjoyed, after a busy day at exacting duties. He was devoted to his wife and fond of the three children, Josephine, Eugene, and Louis.

Eugene was especially lively.¹ He had recently acquired a toy pistol and was amusing the group by exploding percussion caps. The parents, watching, were partners in the pleasure which animated the boy.

Suddenly the scene of domestic felicity was turned to tragedy. A part of one of the percussion caps entered the father's right eye. Medical help was summoned. It was seen at once that the injury was serious.

This was the tragic beginning of the end of the career of J. W. Gray, founder of the *Plain Dealer* and its editor from the start. The accident occurred on the evening of April 9, 1858. Gray died on May 26, 1862.

¹ Eugene was the older of the two sons. Later he was chosen by Walcott, the sculptor, as a model for the sailor lad whose figure is part of the Perry Monument, now in Gordon Park, Cleveland.

Between these dates, more than four years apart, Gray was never able to give to his paper the undivided attention it imperatively needed because of the critical character of the times. For months at a stretch he was completely incapacitated for active work. For many weeks at a time he could not even visit the office.

The injury proved even more serious than was realized at first. The sight of the hurt eye was destroyed forthwith. The impairment spread gradually to the other eye, threatening total blindness. This was followed at last by a form of paralysis which affected the brain.

Returning to his desk near the end of 1861, hoping at the moment that he would be able thenceforth to carry the burden of conducting the enterprise he had built up in the community, Gray wrote:

ONCE MORE AT OUR POST

For the first time in twenty years the proprietor of the Plain Dealer has found it necessary to excuse himself from the duties of an editor in consequence of ill health. Since April last we have spent most of our time in Put-in-Bay island, Lake Erie, engaged in the recruiting service. We are at home now, with our general health very much improved and prepared to renew daily communications with our readers. Although for six months we have stopped reading and writing we have not during that time altogether stopped thinking. . . . This is the poor man's war and is to establish that great principle of human rights, "popular sovereignty." God speed the cause and all the good men engaged in it.²

The hope proved delusive, however, as had other hopes in the same direction. His naturally strong physique had been so deeply undermined as a result of the accident which cost him an eye that Gray found he was quite incapable of carrying on as before.

By late January it became evident that the militant editor and crusader for Democracy in a region hostile to its doctrines

² December 8.

would not be able longer to bear the brunt of an increasingly bitter and merciless warfare. In accordance with this reluctant decision on Gray's part, the following announcement appeared:

THE PLAIN DEALER ESTABLISHMENT FOR SALE

Owing to the continued ill health of the proprietor of this paper, from an affliction which prevents his reading or writing, he is induced to offer for sale the entire establishment of the "Cleveland Plain Dealer," consisting of type, cases, stands, imposing stones, presses, boiler and engine, circulation, reputation and good will. The Plain Dealer was established by its present proprietor in 1840 [*sic*] and has remained under his sole control ever since.³

The *Leader*, of course, lost no time attempting to make capital of Gray's offer to sell: "Don't it sound very funny to hear Gray talk of selling his good will and *reputation*, etc? All the reputation he has is that of being very — doubtful!"⁴

In this same editorial the *Leader* insisted that Gray really wished to sell the *Plain Dealer* because his attitude toward the war had alienated the paper's support and made the property a liability rather than an asset.

Whatever motives may have inspired the offer, no sale was effected. Its disposal was left to those who would inherit the estate.

Four factors contributed to break the spirit of J. W. Gray after the accident had weakened his physical stamina. The first was his loss of the postoffice. The second was his defeat as a candidate for Congress. The third was the establishment of the *National Democrat*. The fourth was the death of Stephen A. Douglas in June 1861.

In reality, Gray left the postmastership with no little credit to himself, since the community realized the fact that he had lost the place because he put principle above political expediency. By swinging his paper to the support of Buchanan, aban-

³ January 23.

⁴ January 29, 1862.

doning policies he had fought for through many years, there is not the slightest doubt that he could have remained postmaster of Cleveland until displaced by some Lincoln appointee.

His defeat for Congress followed closely on his dismissal from the federal post. It seems scarcely possible that Gray could have hoped to win in this abolitionist district. In fact, he gave no evidence of serious disappointment when the returns showed Edward Wade elected.

The "junior" editor, commenting on his chief's nomination, had declared: "We heard him [Gray] say on hearing the result of the convention that losing an eye and an official head were calamity enough for one year, without running a tilt for Congress against a 4,000 fusion majority." The subordinate was sure that "if all his personal friends and the popular sovereignty believers in the district should vote for him, he certainly would be elected."⁵

Gray ran the "tilt." His nomination had been called an anti-Buchanan victory. The convention had, indeed, tabled a resolution endorsing the national administration. His defeat, doubtless, was due in part to anti-Douglas Democrats resentful of Gray's attitude toward the President.

As far back as 1846 the *New York Tribune* had suggested Gray for Congress, doubtless intending it jocosely. Gray, quoting the suggestion, then said: "We have no desire to go to Congress until the 'hard-fisters' are strong enough in this district to vote down all the Greeley, Abby Kelly, Giddings and Garrison Whigs and send us there by a *straight-haired* vote."⁶

By 1858, however, the editor had apparently changed his mind. Even his defeat by Wade did not destroy his wish to serve at Washington. For instance:

We want to go to congress. Have no desire for the postoffice. Had enough of it. Too much. It liked to have cost us our manhood and

⁵ September 20, 1858.

⁶ July 3, 1846.

independence, and did for a time threaten to corrode the sweetness of our temper. But a season of fasting and prayer has restored us to grace and good nature and we are going in for the *redemption of the Reserve* and the NOMINEE OF THE NEXT DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION.⁷

The Congress to which Wade had been elected was the 31st, long famous for the difficulty the House had in choosing a speaker. Sixty-three ballots were required, and organization of the House was delayed till two days before Christmas. Disappointed and ill as he was, Gray was still ready to kid himself about the election:

Mortified beyond endurance and mad beyond cure are we at the stupidity of the voters of the nineteenth district in sending Ed Wade to Congress instead of our modest but mortified self. If we were in Congress, think you the House would not have organized ere this? . . . Will the voters of this district bear us in mind at the next congressional election?⁸

The *National Democrat*,⁹ established by Buchanan followers and controlled by Buchanan appointees in Cleveland, made its appearance at the beginning of 1859. It was to be shortlived, but in its early months was strong enough to cause Gray a good deal of uneasiness. Whatever newspaper favors emanated from Washington were given the new paper. It carried on a continuous warfare against Gray and the *Plain Dealer*. To a man in failing health this threatening competition was a worry, aggravating other circumstances contributing to his discomfiture.

Senator Douglas died on June 3, 1861. Between him and Gray had existed a lifelong personal and political friendship. The *Plain Dealer* was outstanding among Democratic papers of the country in support of the policies which found their chief spokesman in the statesman from Illinois. It had supported his measures of compromise designed to save the country from a

⁷ January 5, 1859.

⁸ December 12, 1859.

⁹ The first issue appeared on January 3, 1859. On February 12, 1861 the *Leader* announced its demise.

civil war. It had ardently supported him for president. And now in the face of actual secession and the beginning of the Civil War, it still hoped that the moderate counsels of Douglas might avert the last measure of disaster.

To a man like Gray, buffeted by misfortune, physically ill and distraught in spirit, the death of the Senator came as a blow more serious than may now seem justified. A drifting ship had lost its anchor. A captain in a losing cause had witnessed the fall of his beloved leader.

Though Gray could give personal attention to the paper only intermittently during the trying weeks which saw the beginning of the war, it cannot be doubted that its general policy was still dictated by him. As the darker days approached, the *Plain Dealer* proved a better prophet than the *Leader*.

The *Leader* had been certain that the election of Lincoln would not mean disaster. "The day after Lincoln is elected this treasonable clamor will stop and the country will resume its usual peace and prosperity."¹⁰

On the other hand, the *Plain Dealer* insisted that "disunion is inevitable in the event of Lincoln's election."¹¹

Gray did everything possible, of course, to prevent the election of Lincoln. With the Republican triumphant, however, and the clouds of war gathering, Gray threw the full support of the *Plain Dealer* to the side of the incoming administration and the purpose of maintaining the Union.

A month and a half before Lincoln was inaugurated the *Plain Dealer* declared:

THE NORTHERN DEMOCRACY WILL NEVER CONSENT TO DISUNION

It is time for northern Democrats there [in Congress] to speak out plainly. Let them tell the south their constituents will not submit to the disruption of the Union. Let them make the south understand that the northern people, without regard to party, stand upon the

¹⁰ November 1, 1860.

¹¹ Quoted by the *Leader*, November 6, 1860.

Jackson ground, and are and will ever be immovable upon it. There is a sentiment in the north. It over-rides every other with a great and now indignant people.¹²

Three months later:

All chances of fraternal compromises are now indefinitely postponed, and we must stand by the government, without flinching, in its endeavors to protect our institutions from hopeless dissolution. . . . Secession is rebellion and now that it has become aggression, consolidated and organized aggression, it must be met by force.¹³

"War or peace with us has no other basis than Union," Gray declared, "and the punishment of traitors and traitors only."¹⁴

This was J. W. Gray at his best. Proud to be known as a Democrat, he was prouder still to be an American and a Union man. Proud to have supported Douglas against Lincoln for president, now that Douglas was dead and Lincoln in the White House, he was even prouder to lend whatever support he could to the head of his afflicted nation.

In his happier days Gray had acquired property and a home on Put-in-Bay Island. Here among his grapes and orchards he now spent many weeks at a time, coming to the city and the office only at rare intervals.

Referring to the fighting in the South and the delusive indications of an early peace, Gray said in May 1862: "The end seems drawing rapidly nigh, and we are justified in anticipating a speedy termination of the war."¹⁵ The end was indeed "drawing rapidly nigh," but not the end of the war. In thirteen days Gray was dead. For him, then, the war had ended.

Increasingly feeble for months, Gray finally succumbed to paralysis. He had visited the office and talked with his colleagues on Saturday. Stricken Sunday night, he died the next afternoon. He was not yet forty-nine years of age.

¹² January 20, 1861.

¹³ April 23, 1861.

¹⁴ August 15, 1861.

¹⁵ May 13.

At a time when, as perhaps never before, the *Plain Dealer* needed the wise guidance of its founder, needed his patriotic devotion to the Union, his ripened judgment, his powers of understanding, and his knowledge of the pitfalls which lay ahead of any newspaper which might be unwilling to throw everything it had into the cause of human liberty — at this critical moment the little percussion cap bore its tragic fruit.

The other Cleveland papers, after fighting Gray with relentless hostility when alive, paid him tribute now. His bitterest foe, the *Leader*, was “pained to learn of his death,” continuing:

Mr. Gray had an active, vigorous temperament which made him a stirring business man and enabled him to accumulate a handsome competence. He was a man of strong feelings and was either a fast friend or an equally decided enemy. His acquaintance extended throughout the country and his sudden death will be widely noted. As a journalist he was positive and pungent and in the palmiest days of the *Plain Dealer* his editorials were widely quoted by friends and foes.¹⁶

Years before, Gray had discussed his financial situation and laid down a policy which he followed religiously to the end:

We claim to be no *miser* in any sense considered — we have kept *nothing in reserve*. Not an *hour*, not a *thought*, not a *dollar* in *money* which we believed would ensure to the happiness or interests of our readers have we not contributed, content thus far by the aid of health, hard labor and the favor of the people to gain an honest livelihood.¹⁷

For twenty years, through a period troublous in the nation and doubly troublous in the Western Reserve, J. W. Gray had been the dominant figure of the *Plain Dealer* and an influential figure in the Democracy of Cuyahoga County. His name as editor and publisher ran at the masthead unbrokenly except for one brief period of a year or two, starting in 1853, when the

¹⁶ May 27, 1862.

¹⁷ June 13, 1849.

firm of Gray, Beardsley, Spear & Co. was announced as owner.¹⁸ Even then Gray remained editor, and would shortly resume complete control. An experiment which seemed to promise well was found disappointing.

Except for this interlude, Gray was the *Plain Dealer* from January 1842 until he died in May 1862. The period covered important years in the development of Cleveland. A forceful, engaging figure in the community passed when Joseph William Gray was laid in his grave in the Erie Street Cemetery.¹⁹

¹⁸ May 17, 1853.

¹⁹ The body was moved to Highland Cemetery in 1907. The body of A. N. Gray was moved from the one cemetery to the other at the same time.

CHAPTER XIII

STORMY WEATHER AND A SHIPWRECK

John S. Stephenson, administrator of the Gray estate, becomes editor and publisher. Insisting that the war was a failure and Lincoln unfit, he antagonizes the community. Publication suspended.

"It was the wish of my dear Husband," wrote Mrs. J. W. Gray to Probate Judge D. R. Tilden of Cuyahoga County, "that John S. Stephenson should aid me in selling his estate. It is my wish also. Let him be the administrator."

The decision was unfortunate. Mrs. Gray lived to regret her part in making it effective.

For the major asset of the Gray estate was the *Plain Dealer*. Had Stephenson been wise enough to leave the editorial direction of the paper to some man better fitted than himself, all might have been well. Instead he assumed personal management, editorial as well as business, and the result was disaster.¹

Stephenson undertook a task for which he had neither aptitude nor training. He had in 1853 married Helen Celeste Gray, a daughter of A. N. Gray, and was therefore a nephew by marriage of the late publisher. He had studied law, but never prac-

¹ N. A. Gray would have seemed a more logical choice for editor to act until the estate was settled and the paper sold. He had been connected with the *Plain Dealer* in one capacity or another practically ever since it was established. There is plenty to show that he enjoyed the complete confidence of his younger brother, the founder.

ticed it, been a deputy sheriff, and worked for a time in the business office of the *Plain Dealer* under his uncle. During the Gray administration of the postoffice Stephenson was local mail agent by appointment of Buchanan and was among the federal employees in Cleveland to be sacrificed to the President's displeasure with Gray. He was removed from office three months after Gray's own dismissal.²

At the time of his own removal Stephenson was chairman of the Cuyahoga County Democratic central committee. The organization had followed Gray out of the Buchanan camp to join the supporters of Douglas. "Old Buck," as the Douglas men called him, was through in his measures of retribution.

The difficulties which beset Stephenson, as spokesman and agent of the estate, are of course not to be minimized. The *Plain Dealer* had been an organ of the Democratic Party from the beginning. It had ridiculed the idea of nominating Abraham Lincoln for president, and opposed his election. Thoroughly committed to the idea of saving the Union, it was still antagonistic to that of abolishing slavery by edict.

Thus the new publisher found himself between two fires in the home field. The Western Reserve was militantly anti-slavery and predominantly abolitionist. It had voted heavily for Lincoln and was now contributing loyally to the support of the Union forces in the field. On the other hand there were here the lusty remnants of a fighting Democracy unwilling to see itself destroyed even in the name of patriotism.

Had J. W. Gray lived through the war, there is every good reason to believe that he would have continued to meet this dilemma in a manner creditable to himself, to his paper, and to the community. He would not have surrendered, as Stephenson was shortly to do, to the radical elements of the Democratic Party. The paper would not have supported Vallandigham for governor; might not have acquired the title of being a "copperhead" publication; would not in all probability have been com-

² *Leader*, September 22, 1858.

pelled at the end of the war to stop its presses and close its doors.

Under Gray the *Plain Dealer* had supported David Tod, Union candidate for governor in 1861, against the Democrat Hugh J. Jewett. It had, indeed, welcomed the prospect of Tod's nomination, saying: "Let us for once go out of party harness, giving the 'frets' and 'galls' an opportunity to heal, while we give to our glorious but endangered country our every thought and energy."³

In harmony with this thought Gray had this to say of Vallandigham: "There is no doubt but his sympathies as well as his associations are with treason, and how much forbearance is due him by the government is not for us to say."⁴

Gray had met the President-elect on the only visit he ever made to Cleveland. After their interview at the Weddell House, Gray wrote that "we must confess to being most favorably impressed. If mistakes do occur in the executive government of this country, we are satisfied they will not be chargeable to design."⁵

Following Lincoln's first call for volunteers, Gray declared:

If the Constitution is to be the guide and President Lincoln wants citizen soldiers to put down rebellion against federal laws, reunite the confederacy and make the flag of our Union respected everywhere, then we, as a Union man, are ready to enlist, forgetting all past differences of political opinion and fighting alone for our country, its liberty and laws.⁶

One could scarcely ask for a more cordial and generous statement from a Douglas Democrat. Having opposed the election of Lincoln, he was now ready to give him full support for putting down rebellion. It was Douglas's own attitude, maintained till the hour of his death.

Stephenson, assuming control of the *Plain Dealer* as administrator of the Gray estate a few days after the proprietor's death,

³ June 3, 1861.

⁵ February 16, 1861.

⁴ September 18, 1861.

⁶ April 15, 1861.

seemed at first personally inclined to follow the same course. This was evidenced by frequent editorials urging support for the administration and the war.

It pursued "but one straight-forward course," the *Plain Dealer* declared, and "this has been for the time being to lay aside all political party contentions and give to the support of the Republican administration our honest, unswerving support."⁷

In July the paper took some of its contemporaries to task:

If the press could only forget side issues, personal interests, fault-finding with generals and commenting on what cannot now be recalled and show as much interest for the government as for some minor matters, there can be an influence concentrated and exerted which would be felt in every branch of the service.⁸

This was fairly typical of the course Stephenson pursued during the first few months after Gray's death. By fall, however, a gradually changing attitude toward the administration and the war was discernible. Affairs were going badly at the front. The two battles of Bull Run had been lost with terrific sacrifices. Federal defeats on the Peninsula and the general lack of initiative at Washington contributed to a critical attitude in the North. The act of the President in relieving General George B. McClellan from his command met widespread Democratic criticism.

Even yet, however, Stephenson was not ready to cut loose from the pro-administration policy which had been set by his wife's uncle. In the state campaign of 1862 the *Plain Dealer* gave mild support to the Union (Republican) ticket. "The action of the Union state convention," it declared, "was eminently wise, patriotic and discreet. The nominations will be acceptable to that great body of patriotic and loyal men composing the Union organization."⁹

⁷ June 14, 1862.

⁸ July 24, 1862.

⁹ August 23, 1862.

But the elections went strongly Democratic. "It is the Devil's doings,"¹⁰ moaned the *Leader*. Democrats were elected to state offices in Ohio, including William W. Armstrong, a future publisher of the *Plain Dealer*, who was chosen secretary of state. The Buckeye delegation in the lower branch of Congress was given a nearly three-to-one Democratic majority.

John S. Stephenson now started to backslide. Cleveland Democrats were dissatisfied. They began saying that if the *Plain Dealer* was unwilling longer to speak for the anti-war party, they would take steps to establish a paper which would do so. Though the *Plain Dealer* continued to run Gray's name at the masthead as editor, it was breaking away from the safe mooring he had fixed for it.

Two weeks after the election the *Leader* commented on the seeming change of attitude on the part of the *Plain Dealer*, making appropriate comments under the delicate caption: "The Dog Returns to his Vomit."¹¹

A week later the *Leader* quotes a Columbus dispatch to the *Cincinnati Gazette* to the effect that the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* "has passed into the hands of a butternut¹² editor, which accounts for its late summerset."¹³

If there had been a change of editors, there is nothing in the record to indicate it, beyond the obvious alteration of policy. The *Leader* thought no change of personnel was involved.

The *Leader*, further, quoted from the *Capital City Post*:

Previous to the October election, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* was not regarded as exactly "sound on the (Democratic) goose" and a committee of Simon Pures was appointed to make arrangements

¹⁰ October 17.

¹¹ October 21, 1862.

¹² "Butternut" was a term popularly synonymous with "copperhead," intended to indicate a Northern sympathizer with the Southern cause. Frontier farmers were supposed to wear clothes dyed with butternut bark. The first Confederate prisoners taken in the war were said to wear such clothes.

¹³ *Leader*, October 29, 1862.

for the establishment of a true and loyal Democratic paper. But since the election the Plain Dealer has come out strongly Democratic and is now regarded as "true blue."¹⁴

On its own account, the *Leader* turned its attention to its old competitor, now laboring in rough seas:

A NEW DEMOCRATIC PAPER

Ever since the project of a new Democratic organ in this city was proposed in the Democratic county convention some months ago the Plain Dealer has trimmed its sails for that market. It had professedly been Union before the election, but thereupon turned about and has ever since overflowed with the most unblushing "butternut" doctrines. But this crooking of "the pregnant hinges of the knee" has disgusted the steadfast butternuts as well as the Union men, and they do not propose negotiating with a weathercock. It is now intended to start the new paper near the beginning of the new year and to put abundant capital in it. As it will have an advantage over the Plain Dealer in this respect, the latter will probably die. Certainly, *two* tory secession sheets cannot live in this locality.¹⁵

In answer to the above, and to a similar editorial in the *Herald*, Arthur Hughes, who had in the county convention moved the resolution looking to the starting of a new Democratic paper, wrote to the *Plain Dealer* explaining that, although a committee had been named, no action was taken. Further, he declared that Democrats were now satisfied with the *Plain Dealer's* "fearless and manly course in advocating and sustaining Democratic principles."¹⁶

So this particular threat of competition appears to have passed, though the possibility of a rival was never absent.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Leader*, November 3, 1862.

¹⁵ December 29, 1862.

¹⁶ December 30, 1862.

¹⁷ In November the *Leader* had noted the "natural death" of the *Cleveland Evening Dispatch* "after a sickly existence of three or four months." It was a Democratic paper, but it appears to have had nothing to do with the local party wish to set up a competition with the *Plain Dealer* on the war issue.

The change of attitude on the part of the *Plain Dealer*, which its critics decried and the Democratic politicians acclaimed, was given special emphasis in an editorial at the beginning of November. It announced a "revival of political discussion," charged Lincoln with unfaithfulness to his pledges, condemned the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, and continued:

Under *new* editorial control the Plain Dealer will hereafter be found, "its old political armor buckled on," steadily battling for those great principles of Popular Sovereignty and Democratic Polity which, as the people have shown in the recent October elections and which we never ceased to believe can alone save the Union, preserve the Constitution and restore the country to an honorable and lasting peace.¹⁸

The step once taken, Stephenson lost no time in realigning the paper with the radical Democracy. Eight days later it demanded a change in the Cabinet. "Miserable inefficiency and imbecility seem to weigh with leaden influence upon our counsels."¹⁹

The Democratic Party, it insisted again, "stands by the Constitution and has always stood by it, while the Republicans are today urging measures which no man of them pretends is sanctioned by that instrument."²⁰

This struck a note of criticism which would become increasingly familiar as the war progressed. The *Plain Dealer*, like the group for which it spoke, could not see that extraordinary, extra-constitutional methods were necessary in order to crush a rebellion which it professed itself as much in earnest as anyone else to see ended by re-establishment of the Union.

¹⁸ November 3, 1862. Lest it be assumed that the *Plain Dealer* was alone or in a small group of newspapers fighting the Lincoln administration, it should be said that many other Democratic papers in the North were taking the same course. For instance, the *New York World*, the *Chicago Times*, the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, and the *Dayton Empire*. The *World* and the *Journal of Commerce* were temporarily suppressed by the War Department.

¹⁹ November 11, 1862.

²⁰ November 12, 1862.

So the war entered its third year. Before the new calendar was obsolete Gettysburg would be fought and the backbone of the Confederacy broken, Clement L. Vallandigham, arch-enemy of Lincoln, would run for governor of Ohio with *Plain Dealer* support, and the paper would find itself still further out of line with the prevailing sentiment of its community.

At the beginning of the year Stephenson said:

We have expressed our opinion of the President so many times that it will be useless to repeat it — Lincoln, by the constitution commander-in-chief of the armies of the United States, has exercised his war power, not as president but as a general. He justifies the act as a military necessity. Having failed to end the war and restore the Union by means of the magnificent armies generously confided to his generalship and guardianship, having in fact suffered them to be decimated and their energy paralyzed by political generals who seem to command the military generals in the field, he has magnanimously resolved to risk what reputation he has left upon the issuing of a Proclamation of Emancipation, and thus terminate the rebellion and the war with one bold dash of the pen. Results will show the wisdom or folly of the measure.²¹

One of Stephenson's heroes at the moment was Horatio Seymour, who had been elected Governor of New York in 1862. His attitude toward the war was, to say the least, one of enthusiasm under perfect control. His handling of the anti-draft riots in July 1863 was subject to general criticism in the North. But the *Plain Dealer* did not change the opinion it had expressed six months earlier:

The only hope which we have of the future of the government to maintain its existence and restore the Union of these states is in the statesmen of which Horatio Seymour is the type. . . .²²

Extravagant, however, was the *Plain Dealer's* praise of Gettysburg and the army which achieved it:

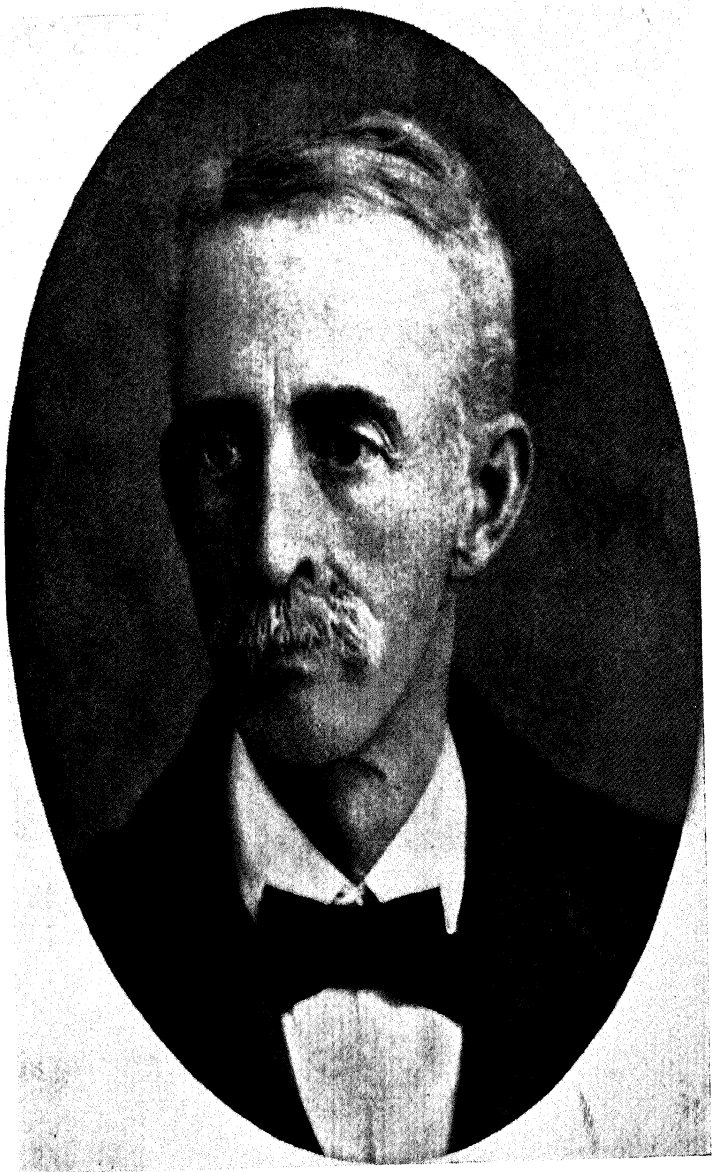
²¹ January 3, 1863.

²² January 13, 1863.



"PLAIN DEALER IRONCLADS"

Some Plain Dealer men in the Civil War. Top row, left to right, Thomas A. Stow and George Whitehead; bottom, F. H. Carroll, Thomas Whitehead, William J. Gleason, and David S. Whitehead.



JOHN S. STEPHENSON

He took control of the paper as administrator of the Gray estate. His management was unfortunate.

Grand, heroic army! All its accumulated disasters; all its wounds and sufferings are atoned for in a blaze of victory, wrought out in the bloodiest and stubbornest contest of the whole war. The sneers of the Richmond papers are answered; the vaunts of the rebel officers are answered; the scoffs of our own unjust press and people are answered. The army stands today the noblest gathering of brave and constant men who ever marched forth to battle, undaunted and undismayed, whether conquering or repulsed. Honor! Eternal honor to it! ²³

To this army and to the other armies of the North the *Plain Dealer* establishment had contributed generously of its manpower. A distinguished soldier from the composing-room was James B. Hampson, the first commissioned officer inside the Confederate entrenchments at Corinth, who was killed as a major near Dallas, Georgia. As a drill-master for the Cleveland Grays, a "brilliant and successful military career" had been prophesied for him by Colonel McCook.

William Haines became colonel of the 100th Ohio Regiment. In a single group, photographed by W. C. North in 1864, were the following *Plain Dealer* men: Thomas A. Stow, second lieutenant Company E; George Whitehead, second lieutenant Company D; P. H. Carroll, first sergeant Company E; Thomas Whitehead, third sergeant Company E; William J. Gleason, Company E; and David S. Whitehead, Company A. These were the "Plain Dealer Ironclads," by the designation given them by the office.

As early as the fall of 1863 the paper declared that it had already sent into the war one colonel, one major, one captain, one lieutenant, several sergeants, and numerous privates.²⁴

These contributions, however, did not alter Stephenson's determination to press his resistance to the Lincoln administration and to challenge its conduct of the war. This became increasingly evident as the state campaign of 1863 approached. In 1861 the *Plain Dealer*, after some apparent hesitation, had

²³ July 6, 1863.

²⁴ October 20, 1863.

thrown its support to the Democrat David Tod, running as the Union candidate for governor.

In 1863 the Democrats nominated the exiled Clement L. Vallandigham and the Union candidate was John Brough. The *Plain Dealer* hesitated again, but after a few weeks swung into line for the Democratic nominee. Appropriate was the comment of the *Leader*, that "the same Plain Dealer which in 1861 ranked Vallandigham with the traitors now ranks him with the honored of the land and supports him as worthy of confidence and official position. . . ." ²⁵

Vallandigham was not the *Plain Dealer's* first choice for the Democratic nomination, as he certainly was not of the rank and file of the party over the state. He was the idol of the radicals. He had served two terms in Congress and was defeated for a second re-election even in the face of the Democratic sweep of 1862. He is remembered today as the bitterest opponent the Union government had in the North. He was finally arrested and banished to the Confederate lines. Escaping to Canada, he continued his attitude of disloyalty and from his safe haven at Windsor maintained his ascendancy over the Democracy of Ohio.

For two days before the meeting of the state convention in June the *Plain Dealer* urged the nomination of General George B. McClellan of Cincinnati for governor. Friends of Vallandigham, however, controlled the convention. The exile was pictured as a "martyr" and, so far as the delegates were concerned, the appeal proved irresistible. ²⁶

Even after the nomination Stephenson was for a time unwilling to break with the Gray precedent far enough to support for governor the man whom Gray had denounced two years before

²⁵ August 25, 1863.

²⁶ Vallandigham being in exile, the campaign for the Democratic ticket was led by George E. Pugh of Cincinnati, candidate for lieutenant governor. He had represented Ohio in the United States Senate for the term ending two years before.

as sympathetic with treason. Vallandigham was nominated on June 11. The *Plain Dealer* declared its support of him on the last day of July.

Answering a *Herald* statement that this delay in coming out for Vallandigham was designed to force a sale of the paper, Stephenson replied that the *Plain Dealer* "has neither been offered for sale, nor have any offers of purchase been made to it. The paper is absolutely independent financially, and was never in so flourishing a condition as it is today. There is no earthly use for selling it, nor have the proprietors the most shadowy thought of doing so." ²⁷

Once in the Vallandigham camp, however, Stephenson put everything the paper had into the campaign for his election. On a single day he printed three columns of extracts from Vallandigham speeches touching the war, and found them "replete with patriotism." ²⁸ His characterization of the convention which had nominated Brough against Vallandigham was that it was an "abolition disunion convention." ²⁹

It is not probable that the *Plain Dealer* had any serious regrets over Vallandigham's defeat for governor by the biggest majority ever recorded in the state to that time.

"This paper," it declared, "has faithfully, zealously and honestly stood by the government during the progress of this war." ³⁰ Western Reserve Union men must have smiled at this assertion, so soon after the election.

Again: "The *Plain Dealer* since the war began has been a vigorous war sheet." ³¹

This was part of what the *Leader* had earlier called its evening contemporary's "contemptible shuffling." The *Plain Dealer*, it insisted, had "lost all manhood and respect in its blind advocacy of the traitorous doctrines of the Canada traitor and

²⁷ September 5, 1863.

²⁸ September 8, 1863.

²⁹ June 17, 1863.

³⁰ December 10, 1863.

³¹ December 17, 1863.

now seeks to convince the people that it has some loyalty left." ³²

The *Plain Dealer* greeted the fourth year of the war with these words:

The year that has just begun may be regarded in many respects as the most important one which has yet dawned upon national existence. . . . It remains to be determined during the year 1864 whether the people have finally given in to the idea of the federal constitution and whether it is to be regarded hereafter as a mere supplementary agency of government convenient in holiday times but mere waste paper in seasons of peril. The presidential election will settle this matter.³³

The *Plain Dealer*, with other Northern Democratic papers, had begun before the end of the previous year to advocate the nomination of McClellan to oppose Lincoln's re-election. Quoting the general, it declared that "this war must go on till armed rebellion is subdued." ³⁴

Emphasizing its hostility to the doctrine of abolition and to the idea that the war must bring about an end of slavery, the paper insisted that "had the Crittenden Compromise been adopted by Congress and submitted to the country, the nation would have been spared this long, devastating war." ³⁵

Into the campaign for the election of McClellan the *Plain Dealer*, directed by Stephenson, put everything it had. Even the President at times was very doubtful of his own success at the polls that fall. Oddly, as it seems now, he questioned whether the convention would nominate him and whether, if nominated, he could win the popular verdict.

³² October 22, 1863.

³³ January 2, 1864.

³⁴ December 17, 1863.

³⁵ August 18, 1864. The Crittenden Compromise was embodied in a constitutional amendment proposed by Senator John J. Crittenden of Kentucky. It would have divided the Union into free-state and slave-state portions, the dividing line being the 36-30 parallel. It met with no favor in Congress.

The anti-Lincoln Republican convention in Cleveland at the end of May, and its nomination of John C. Frémont for president, gave the *Plain Dealer* material for many an attack on the administration. Plainly, it worried Washington also. This convention, Stephenson was satisfied, marked "the death knell of Abraham Lincoln's ambition."³⁶

Again a month later the *Plain Dealer* foresaw Lincoln beaten by his own letter of acceptance. If this letter, it said, "does not destroy Lincoln's last chance for re-election we shall get ready to abandon faith in the manliness and public spirit of the people. . . . Thousands of his own party will abandon him in disgust."³⁷

By midsummer Stephenson was in full cry at the heels of the administration. In July he criticized the President for refusing to "entertain propositions for a peaceful conference" on the war; for his refusal to "negotiate peace *save on the condition of the absolute Abolition of Slavery in the South.*" The editorial concludes with these words: "Mr. Lincoln stands in the way of peace. He must be removed."³⁸

One day later the paper submits "some facts for the consideration of the people," arguing fourteen reasons why Lincoln should not be re-elected.³⁹ They include charges of usurpation of authority, broken pledges regarding interference with slavery, attempting to destroy the independence of the judiciary, using to his personal advantage such utilities as the telegraph, the railroads and the postoffice; that he "has stood in the way of an honorable adjustment of the war in order to carry out schemes of personal aggrandizement." Climaxing this amazing indictment, the *Plain Dealer* said:

³⁶ May 31, 1864. Unhappily for Stephenson — happily for the country — the convention was a failure. Frémont withdrew as a candidate and threw his support to Lincoln.

³⁷ June 30.

³⁸ July 22, 1864.

³⁹ July 23.

If the four years of Abraham Lincoln's administration have not graven with letters of fire upon the soul of the people the fact that he is a dangerous character and that his re-election would be fatal to the best interests of the country, then has "reason fled to brutish beasts" and we may as well abandon faith in the popular instincts.

McClellan's defeat in November discouraged but did not stop the tide of the paper's criticism of the administration. Immediately after the election, it urged that the general be nominated again in 1868.⁴⁰ It found the President's annual message in December "the tamest and most uninteresting paper of the kind that ever received the signature of the head of a great nation."⁴¹

The year 1865 was for the nation one of mingled triumph and sorrow. It saw the surrender of Lee and the end of the war. It saw, also, the murder of Lincoln.

For the *Plain Dealer* the train of events followed somewhat the same course, reversed in order. It saw the paper reach the lowest level of its existence, and finally witnessed its complete suspension. It also saw the *Plain Dealer* resurrected and started on a new career of usefulness and influence.

Stephenson gradually piped down after the defeat of McClellan. By the beginning of the new year his criticisms of the administration became increasingly perfunctory and infrequent. In February he discussed the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery, which had then been started on its way to the states for ratification:

We have long believed that the institution of slavery was hastening on to death and its grave was being digged by the hands of its own supporters. For our own part, we should have been content to let it work out the destiny that seemed inevitable. . . .⁴²

But the *Plain Dealer* accepted the contrary decision, as represented by the amendment, and hoped for the best.

⁴⁰ November 11, 1864.

⁴¹ December 8, 1864.

⁴² February 1, 1865.

In the same month it declared that "the nation has cause for great rejoicing and hallelujahs to the Most High" because of the fall of Charleston, the "birthplace of treason."⁴³

Stephenson's control of the paper now neared its end. On March 10 Mrs. Gray petitioned the court to remove Stephenson as administrator of the estate, charging unfaithfulness and failure to perform properly the duties of his office. The court appointed George H. Wyman as referee to hear the case, and he reported⁴⁴ that, after hearings were in progress, an agreement was reached, which took the matter out of his hands.

The nature of the agreement was indicated by a statement Stephenson made to Judge Tilden that "for reasons satisfactory to myself and that seem to be justifiable, I hereby tender my resignation" as administrator.⁴⁵ To succeed Stephenson the court appointed General A. S. Sanford, business man and civic leader, commander of the Cleveland Grays and one-time head of the state militia. He completed the task of settling the estate of his late friend, the founder of the paper.

Meanwhile the *Plain Dealer* had suspended publication early in March.⁴⁶ Its career seemingly ended, the paper would be given a fresh start, under entirely new auspices, seven weeks later.

⁴³ February 20, 1865.

⁴⁴ August 19.

⁴⁵ March 23, 1865.

⁴⁶ Stephenson's last issue was either March 7 or 8. The last which the writer has been able to find bears the earlier date, but the numbering adopted after the resurrection indicates there is one day's issue missing. After his resignation as administrator Stephenson drifted into a variety of activities, lived for a time at Elyria, and then moved with his family to Iowa. He died at Chicago on April 11, 1892.



P A R T I I

The Armstrong Regime (1865-1885)

CHAPTER I

THE PLAIN DEALER IS BORN AGAIN

William W. Armstrong, Tiffin newspaper publisher and recently Ohio secretary of state, buys the wreckage of the paper, and publication is resumed.

TEN or a dozen men sat in earnest conference in the Merchants' Exchange Building, above the Leutkemyer hardware store.¹ They were prominent Cleveland Democrats, and the object of their session was to consider the fact that the community no longer possessed a newspaper which spoke their political language. The *Leader* and the *Herald* preached Republican doctrine morning and afternoon. The *Plain Dealer* had disappeared.

Among the conferees above the hardware store were some of the best-known citizens of Cleveland. There were Judge Rufus P. Ranney, Judge Samuel Starkweather, James D. Cleveland, Henry B. Payne, Harvey Rice, Thomas Stow, George F. Marshall, and Morris Jackson. Most of them had been friends of J. W. Gray. Cleveland had been an associate editor under the founder. In Payne's office Gray had studied law. Stow had been a friend and confidant of J. W. Gray and by him had been made foreman of the composing-room. For Rice this was the third time he had participated in the promotion of a Democratic paper in the city. He had been present in 1827 at the birth of the

¹ H. W. Leutkemyer's hardware store was at 150 Superior Street, opposite the Weddell House.

Independent News-Letter, blood ancestor of the *Plain Dealer*, and for a time was its editor. He had been one of the men to encourage Gray to start the *Plain Dealer* nearly twenty years later. Now one of Cleveland's elder statesmen and universally respected, he with others sat in conference as to how to bring another Democratic paper into existence.

The men found themselves immediately in agreement on one point: that the city and the Reserve must have such a paper. Alternative proposals were before the group. One was to find fresh capital somehow to buy what remained of the old *Plain Dealer* from the Gray estate and start publishing again the paper which the brothers from the St. Lawrence country had established in 1842. The other was to forget the *Plain Dealer* name, try to erase from memory the disaster brought on the property under John S. Stephenson, and start an entirely new paper, under new auspices and a new name.

Thomas Stow had gathered figures indicating what it would cost to start from scratch. His fellow conferees shook their heads. So much money for such an enterprise would be difficult to raise.

Judge Ranney said he knew a man who, if he could be persuaded to undertake the task, would be found capable of rebuilding the old *Plain Dealer* and, he believed, make a success of it. The man was William W. Armstrong, proprietor of the *Seneca Advertiser* at Tiffin, Ohio. Armstrong had served one term as Ohio secretary of state, having been elected to the office in that unexpected Democratic sweep of the state in the 1862 election. He had run for re-election two years later, but was buried in the Republican avalanche.

Ranney's idea seemed best to the assembled Democrats, and it was resolved to approach the man at Tiffin and see if he could be enticed to this larger field.² The matter, it proved, was not difficult to arrange. Armstrong undertook at once the difficult

² Tiffin in 1865 had a population of less than 5,000. Cleveland had 67,500.

task of breathing new life into a dead enterprise. And there is probably nothing in the whole realm of human activity quite so devoid of life as a newspaper whose presses have not turned a wheel for seven weeks.

Exactly why at the end it was decided to suspend publication has never been established. The only explanation one finds is the unconvincing one offered by General A. S. Sanford, who succeeded Stephenson as administrator of the estate. In the first number of the revived *Plain Dealer* Sanford declared that the "temporary" suspension was "owing to the passage of its effects from the hands of the former administrator into mine."

Since the estate had the newspaper to sell, and a newspaper is so obviously more salable as a going enterprise than as one in suspension, it is not reasonable to suppose that in this case the presses were stopped and the typesetters dismissed merely to facilitate a transfer of authority from one administrator to another. The apparent fact is that the enterprise had been so ineptly handled by Stephenson that it could no longer stand against the hostile sentiment of its community.

By chance the *Plain Dealer* missed the opportunity of reporting two epochal events in American history. When Lee surrendered at Appomattox the newspaper plant at Superior and Vineyard Streets was dark and its presses still. When Lincoln was shot in the theater at Washington less than a week later, there was still no *Plain Dealer* to chronicle the tragedy.

By chance, again, the first issue of the paper after its resurrection appeared just in time to report the capture and death of J. Wilkes Booth, murderer of the great President.

On the news of Lee's surrender Cleveland streets were decorated with the national colors in token of the event which ended the war, and flags floated from practically every building in the city. Some wag made his way into the silent rooms of the suspended *Plain Dealer* and hauled a bedraggled white ensign to the top of the old flagpole.³

³ *Herald*, April 11, 1865.

Though neither the *Herald* nor the *Leader* had deigned to notice the suspension of the *Plain Dealer*, both were soon printing gossip about its probable revival. The *Leader* thought Stephenson would be connected with it.⁴ "We may very soon," it said, "be called upon to note the fact that this old Democratic journal of northern Ohio has availed to revisit the glimpses of the moon; nay, to brave the light of open day."⁵

Both the *Plain Dealer's* old contemporaries greeted the announcement of Armstrong's purchase of the paper with cordial words of welcome. The new proprietor, declared the *Leader*, "is a vigorous writer, and, we doubt not, will make the *Plain Dealer* one of the most able Democratic journals in the state. He has our best wishes for his success in all except his political undertakings."⁶

One day later the *Herald*: "In a word, we intend to live by the side of the Plain Dealer in gentlemanly emulation in business and in dignified, candid editorial opposition in politics."

In both these comments is evidence that the community expected the new proprietor of the *Plain Dealer* to conduct it as a political organ. There was no reason for a contrary assumption. Years later Armstrong was to admit that much of the trouble he encountered as a publisher in Cleveland was due to his following exactly this course expected of him in the beginning.

Thus after what the *Leader* called "a short sleep — a sort of Rip Van Winkle episode"⁷ — the resurrected *Plain Dealer* made its initial bow on April 25, 1865. Above the signature of W. W. Armstrong appeared this statement:

TO THE PLAIN DEALER PATRONS

The undersigned this day assumes the management of the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

For years connected with a Democratic journal and having upon more than one occasion been the recipient of the confidence and

⁴ March 14, 1865.

⁶ April 25.

⁵ March 24.

⁷ April 26.

support of the Democracy of Ohio, I deem it unnecessary to indulge in an elaborate salutory.

The Plain Dealer will sustain those principles adjudged by the Democratic party to be most conducive to the interests of the country and the prosperity of the people. The great and paramount hope of all Democrats and conservatives is that our civil strife shall cease; that the Union may be restored and forever perpetuated; the requirements of the constitution fulfilled, the rights of the states preserved, the liberties of the people maintained, the laws enforced, and peace and fraternal good feeling be re-established throughout the length and breadth of the land. There has been an honest difference of opinion as to the *means* of saving the Union among the people of the north, and, though partisans for political ends may assert otherwise, the *Democratic party never has proposed to, nor will it ever, accept disunion on any terms or under any circumstances.*

Recrimination and denunciation now of one party by another, as to its past policy is idle. There are questions looming up which will soon bury in oblivion the issues of the past. They must be met. Our armies and generals have nobly performed the work assigned them. The statesmanship of the country must now be called into requisition to bring our national difficulties to a satisfactory and permanent conclusion. The adoption of a conciliatory policy upon the part of our triumphant government will in our judgment bring about a restoration of the Union, a universal acknowledgment of allegiance to the old flag, and a ready submission of the great body of insurgents to constitutional authority. Our soldiers would return to their former peaceful avocations; the industry of the country once more turned into the channels of peace, bitter animosities would be softened, and in future all vexed questions would be disposed of without a resort to the powerful and destructive arbitrament of war, for after the bitter experience of four years, when peace does come, "She will not tarry with us as a wayfarer, but will dwell with us."

The Democracy of the country must keep up their organization. Composed of two hundred and fifteen thousand men in Ohio, and numbering a million and over in the north, it has a mission to fulfill. The people in the dark hours of the past have entrusted it with confidence, and we have an abiding faith that they will yet turn to the historic old organization and ask its wisdom and experience to lead them once more out of trouble into the path of tranquility and permanent concord. The Plain Dealer will sustain the nominees of all regularly constituted Democratic conventions, and by all honorable

means seek to secure the indorsal of Democratic men and policy by the people.

Armstrong, of course, realized as well as anyone the causes that lay back of Stephenson's failure. At the beginning he showed a desire to soften the antagonistic feeling in the community which had finally proved Stephenson's undoing. In the first issue appeared this editorial:

ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN

It was in contemplation to have commenced the issue of the Plain Dealer on Monday of last week (this was Tuesday evening) but a series of unlooked for circumstances intervened and prevented. The following article was prepared and in type for that issue. Though some time has elapsed since the commission of the deed commented upon, and comment on its atrocity has been almost exhausted, we give the article as it was written upon hearing of the foulest crime ever committed upon earth. . . .

Abraham Lincoln is dead! He never received our suffrage, and we have widely differed with many of the measures of public policy inaugurated by his administration, yet his political opponents have ever entertained for him more admiration than for any of the leading men of the administration party. They long felt that the great mass of voters — the "plain people" of the country — had confidence in his personal integrity and believed that he was moved by patriotic motives. Especially in connection with recent events, and in the late phase of the war, had Mr. Lincoln begun to secure the confidence of men of all parties. The Democratic party which had so zealously opposed his re-election were sincerely pleased to see that he manifested so decided a disposition to adopt a conciliatory and lenient policy that would at an early period bring to our government that peace and tranquility so much desired.

Mr. Lincoln had a kindly heart, amiable temper and a forgiving disposition, and was undoubtedly more anxious than any of his party to stop the flow of blood, stay the hand of strife and re-establish order. Had his death been a natural one, it would have been calamitous, but at an hour when he held in his hand the olive branch — when the prospect of healing our national differences was so bright, when grim war with his relentless, stony heart was about to be banished and the reign of "Fair peace, dove-eyed child of Christ," in-

augurated — it is a calamity that all true men most sincerely deplore. The death of Mr. Lincoln, deeply regretted in the north, is a calamity to the south, and the assassin in putting him to death not only inflicted a severe blow to the north but a grievous injury to the south. He probably would have been more lenient in his terms to the vanquished insurgents than any of the leaders of the opposition party and the southern people as well as those of the north should therefore be anxious that the guilty perpetrator of this wanton wrong should be brought to justice and punishment. . . .

Armstrong was a stranger to most Cleveland people. His task was to piece together again an enterprise which hostile public sentiment had wrecked. On the second day of the new publication came this editorial:

BORN AGAIN

The Cleveland Plain Dealer, the only Democratic paper in northern Ohio, has subsided — vanished. Its death struggle was hard.

The above paragraph we find floating in the opposition sheets in this and other states. Will the gentlemen of the press who have chronicled the demise of the Plain Dealer in such curt terms take notice that it has been “born again,” is in good condition and bound to grow!

We commend the above paragraph to the consideration of our Democratic friends. It is a jubilant crow over what was considered the final termination of the career of the Plain Dealer. . . . From our knowledge of the Democracy of the Reserve and of northern Ohio, we are satisfied that they will omit no exertions to secure for the Plain Dealer the circulation it should receive to make it an efficient organ. No truer Democrats can be found anywhere than in this section of our state. They have faced the storm of detraction and braved the fire of political persecution — they have withstood the blandishments of power and patronage — with a firmness indicating that they have within them the consciousness of knowing they are right. We believe they will stand by us; we know we shall stand by them. In this connection we deem it proper to say that while the Plain Dealer shall be Democratic in its views, it will be the endeavor of the new management to make it a *good newspaper*. We will not

make politics a *specialty*, though having our firm political convictions, and never hesitating to fearlessly express them. The Plain Dealer, granting the right of all to differ with it on political questions, claims the same privilege for itself, and hopes to win the respect of its political foes, if it cannot secure their indorsal. Let time decide as to policy. It makes all things even.⁸

The new editor speedily acknowledges the cordiality of the *Leader* and the *Herald* in welcoming him to the local field:

THE CITY PRESS

We return our acknowledgments to our cotemporaries of the city press for the favorable mention they have made of us and our enterprise. In all matters pertaining to business we expect to act in harmony with them, for in union of this kind there is strength. Politically, we will differ with them. We shall grant that they are sincere in their belief; we claim that we are honest in our convictions. We shall eschew personalities in our editorial intercourse with our neighbors, and assure them that in this direction we shall be last to commence hostilities.

There was an element of defiance in the decision of Armstrong and his advisers to keep the original name of the paper. They might have scrapped Gray's "new bottle" and chosen a new designation, seeking thus to encourage newspaper readers to forget that a publication called the *Plain Dealer* had ever existed.

It would, of course, on the other hand have been deemed by many Democrats a cowardly retreat from honest convictions. Party feelings ran high as the war closed, and the Republicans, while dominant, did not rule unchallenged. There were plenty in the northern part of the state who still maintained that the *Plain Dealer* and other anti-administration papers had been right in principle, even though at times their spirit of criticism overleaped the bounds of reasonable propriety.

Though Armstrong had plenty of occasion later for question-

⁸ April 26, 1865.

ing the decision to retain the name the Grays had given the paper twenty-three years before, the ultimate wisdom of the choice becomes apparent as the history of the paper unfolds. For Armstrong and his backers in 1865 it was chiefly a question as to which was the easiest and cheapest way to get a Democratic daily started at once. There is nothing to indicate that any sentimental attachment was felt either toward the old paper or the old name which compelled the retention of the latter.

It was thus at least as much by chance as by design that the name *Plain Dealer* was preserved. The old name was taken, along with the old presses, the old type, and the old traditions. A distinctive and advantageous designation thus survived. The Republicans of the Western Reserve were given notice that their waspish critic of antebellum days was alive again and ready for business at the old stand.

A feeling which must have dwelt in many Democratic minds throughout the Western Reserve found expression in a letter signed "A. T. H." which was printed a week later:

Friend Armstrong: — When I heard the Plain Dealer had suspended I felt as though I had lost an old friend. I have taken the old paper for fifteen years and if you continue it fifteen years more put me down as a subscriber if I live! Our Union friends have been taunting us with the suspension of our paper, but I always told them it would come up all right, and thank the Lord, it has turned up as I predicted.⁹

The correspondent was too conservative. The paper was to continue far longer than the fifteen years he hoped for. It is already seventy-seven years since "A. T. H." wrote his letter. The contemporaries which welcomed Armstrong to the local field were, in time, to surrender it to the enterprise which William W. Armstrong had called back to life.

⁹ May 3, 1865.

CHAPTER II

CLEVELAND AT THE END OF THE WAR

Peace finds Cleveland started on an era of rapid business growth, much of it founded on steel and oil. Commerce by rail and water.

THE CLEVELAND which faced William W. Armstrong on his arrival was a different Cleveland from the one J. W. Gray found to greet his first efforts in journalism. In twenty-three years the city on the Cuyahoga had shown remarkable progress in all directions. It had ten times the population, many times the volume of business. Cincinnati was still by a wide margin the first city of Ohio, but its rate of growth was already far below Cleveland's.

The fact has been emphasized by others that this city appeared to suffer little economically from the Civil War, in spite of her patriotic sacrifices in men and money. Through the early 1860's, as through the 1850's, Cleveland's advancement was confident and steady. The *Plain Dealer* under Armstrong thus entered the scene at a time when economic opportunities were ripe and the need for civic leadership obvious.

Between the federal census of 1840, two years before the appearance of the weekly *Plain Dealer*, and that of 1860, near the end of the Gray regime, Cleveland's population had jumped from 6,071 to 43,417. A local census indicated that at the end of the war Cleveland's population was 67,500. More important than the increase in numbers, however, was the change in the

racial character of the people. The city in 1840 had been, practically speaking, a bit of New England set down in the Western Reserve, though the construction of the canal had already brought a slight infiltration of foreign-born into the community.

By 1860 the census-takers found that 44.76 per cent of Cleveland's population was of foreign extraction. More of this immigration had come from Germany than from any other country. This percentage was not out of line with those of other growing American cities. The figure for Cincinnati was 45.71 per cent.

Needless to say, these newcomers from Europe brought to the cities of their adoption brain, brawn, and an appreciation of America which natives too often neglect to show. Coming to this country as part of the migration which followed the disturbances in Germany in 1848, with Carl Schurz and others later to be distinguished in American history, they contributed mightily to the growth in material things and in character, here as in every other American city struggling upward in the middle of the last century. As early as 1846 the *Germania*, Cleveland's first German-language newspaper, made its appearance.¹

Two events in far-separated regions contributed greatly to give Cleveland the impetus which was in evidence as the Civil War closed. Frontiersmen in search of furs and copper in the Northwest found iron instead, and thus unwittingly laid a cornerstone in Cleveland's manufacturing greatness. A former railroad conductor, drilling for "rock oil" in Pennsylvania, found petroleum in such quantities as to start a new epoch in American industrial expansion and gave Cleveland a major boost.

The first ore to reach Cleveland from the newly discovered deposits in the Lake Superior region came in half a dozen barrels in the steamer *Baltimore* in 1852. These few bushels of ore were the trickle which grew into a mighty stream to feed the mills along the Cuyahoga and to make the city one of the great-

¹ The *Germania* was absorbed by the *Anzeiger* in 1890 and thus became three years later part of the *Wächter und Anzeiger*.

est in the world in the production of iron and steel products.

The Cleveland Board of Trade presented in 1866 its first complete summary of local business for the preceding year. The report constituted a sort of business picture of the city at the end of the war.

It showed, for instance, that Cleveland's iron-ore trade in 1865 reached a total value of \$1,179,200. The local sales of manufactured wrought iron, most of it from Cleveland factories, exceeded \$6,000,000. Three thousand men and \$3,000,000 in capital were employed turning out railroad iron and other products of the Northwest ore beds. More than 84,000,000 feet of lumber had been received, while other articles made from lumber rose to imposing totals.

Further, the Board of Trade report showed, among other facts, that there were then thirty oil refineries operating in Cleveland. John D. Rockefeller, not yet twenty-six years old, was already on the route to unexampled wealth from oil. In 1865 he sold his interest in the commission business down on the river and put everything he had into the new industry of refining petroleum. His Standard Oil Company was still five years in the future, but the power of the trust-builder was already being felt wherever oil was a matter of business concern.

A capital of about a million and a half was tied into Cleveland's refineries, and the city was in a fast and furious race with Pittsburgh for supremacy in this new enterprise of making useful for domestic purposes the crude output of an increasing army of pumpers. By 1869, however, there was no longer a question of pre-eminence. Cleveland was then the center of oil refining for the whole world, though located two hundred miles from the nearest producing wells. Transportation was the answer; rail and water transportation, plus the industrial genius of Rockefeller.

Supplementing these major activities was Cleveland's pre-eminence as a shipbuilding center. The *Herald* in September 1865 pointed out that the city then stood "confessedly at the

head of all places on the chain of lakes " as a builder of carriers by water. "Cleveland," it declared, " has the monopoly of propeller building, its steam tugs are the finest on the lakes, whilst Cleveland-built sailing vessels not only outnumber all other vessels on the chain of lakes but are found on the Atlantic coast, in English waters, up the Mediterranean and in the Baltic."

Far-flung, indeed, was the fame of Cleveland-made products. The city was making in striking totals iron and steel from ore, refined petroleum from crude oil, ships from the resources of the forest.

Thus, with steel and oil underlying the city's developing business strength and — more important — with the manufacturing genius present to direct the enterprises growing out of them, the end of the war found this metropolis of the Reserve dominating northern Ohio, as Cincinnati had long dominated the southern portion of the state, and coming now to be considered one of the most promising spots in what the East still called the West.

When J. W. Gray read proof on his first issue in 1842, no railroad had yet come so far toward the frontier. By contrast Armstrong found operating daily in and out of Cleveland the Atlantic & Great Western, with its boasted six-foot track gauge, the Cleveland & Pittsburgh, Cleveland & Toledo, Cleveland, Columbus & Cincinnati, Cleveland, Painesville & Ashtabula,² and the Cleveland & Mahoning. This year saw the completion of what was then called the magnificent union passenger station on the lake front. The sorry remnants of this old structure still stand, serving as the downtown terminal of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Street cars, horse-drawn of course, and undreamed of when the *Plain Dealer* first appeared, were now operated by three companies: the East Cleveland, the Kinsman Street, and the

² A passenger could leave Cleveland at 9.50 a.m. and, by changing to the New York Central at Buffalo, reach New York City at 1 p.m. the next day.

West Side companies. The downtown terminus of the West Side cars was beside the *Plain Dealer* office at Superior and Vineyard Streets, where crews loitered between runs and passengers gathered to await the cars. It meant good business for the paper around press time, Armstrong was later to recall. There was no track connection between these lines and those operating eastward to the Square.

The Ohio canals were nearing the end of their usefulness so far as transportation was concerned, but in the 1865-6 city directory, Pelton, French & Co., commission and forwarding merchants, advertised that they were agents for the Akron Transportation Co., which shipped by the old waterway. Though the age of electricity was in the future, Edward P. Fenn advertised that he made "electrical apparatus of all descriptions." He would be surprised now could he know the wide variety of appliances and the complexity of a business which was comparatively simple at the end of the war.

The Ohio & Kentucky Petroleum & Mining Co. told readers of the directory that it owned "oil farms in the very heart of the lubricating oil regions of southeastern Ohio." Stock in this new kind of "farming" was for sale in Cleveland, the company being represented by Davis, Peixotto & Co. The Peixotto of the firm was the former associate editor of the *Plain Dealer*.

Gradually Cleveland was edging away from the river, though east of the Public Square was still considered pretty much out of the current of business life. And not far from the center of the city rural conditions prevailed. The *Leader* complained that about 150 cows wandered at large on the west side and in Brooklyn, and urged that the council do something about it. These, the editor said, were Cleveland's undesirable "vagrants." He warned that "owners of vagrant cows had better look out for their feminine bovines."³

The community was beginning to realize that at least one thing the *Plain Dealer* had said only a few years before was not

³ June 14, 1865.

likely to prove true; namely, that "the river is the natural commercial center of the city, and always will be."⁴

Cleveland was winning renown for civic pride and beauty as well as for business energy. A reporter for the *New York World* attending a convention in Cleveland told his paper: "One of its streets which by its name of Euclid is suggestive of geometrical arrangements, is perhaps the finest avenue in the west, a double row of charming villas and gardens where one might sigh to dwell."⁵ Such sentiments of admiration for the Euclid Avenue of that period were spread through the newspapers of many cities.

For genuine rhapsody, however, one may turn to the *Juneau County* (Wisconsin) *Argus*, whose editor visited Cleveland and then bubbled over in these words:

The Forest City! The Fountain City! La Belle City! Cleveland! — beautiful for situation — abounding in palatial mansions looking out through a wealth of magnificent foliage, spangled with floral gems — like sparkling diamonds in the flowing tresses of some fair maiden. Of all the western aspirants for the crown of beauty, we adjudge thee Queen. . . .⁶

"While Euclid Avenue is becoming each year more stylish and regal," remarked the *Plain Dealer* local, "Prospect and St. Clair and Lake streets — and even Kinsman street — are raising their heads and are constantly increasing their supply of beautiful homes."⁷

Cleveland saw its first steam fire-engine in 1862. The next year brought the first paid fire department. In 1864, under Postmaster Cowles, the city's first mail-carrier began his door-to-door deliveries, marking a great forward stride in the govern-

⁴ January 5, 1859. Compare this with the *Herald's* statement (April 21, 1826) that Cleveland's peculiar soil "will forever render it unnecessary to pave" the city's streets!

⁵ Quoted by the *Plain Dealer*, May 25, 1863.

⁶ Quoted by the *Plain Dealer*, June 18, 1863.

⁷ July 10, 1866.

ment postal service. The year the *Plain Dealer* reappeared, Cleveland got its first professional baseball team.

Geographically as well as industrially the city had taken advantage of the years between 1842 and 1865 to consolidate its strength. The year 1850 saw the annexation of the rest of Cleveland township, which extended the city limits on the east to what is now East 55th Street. Four years later Ohio City, west of the river, joined her former rival and became part of Cleveland. That part of Brooklyn township which, to the west of Irishtown bend of the Cuyahoga, pointed like a huge thumb toward the heart of the city was annexed in 1864. Using present-day terminology, the city then extended from East 55th to West 58th Street and southerly to a line following roughly the Big Four Railroad west of the river and the Nickel Plate to the east.

The Public Square had become a new center of activity. Business structures had largely supplanted the dwellings which so nearly surrounded the area in the early 1840's. The Perry Monument, encircled by an iron picket fence, stood in the center where now Superior Avenue and Ontario intersect. The post-office had taken the place of the building which housed the Ark. The whole area was lighted by gas. The Forest City House was there, occupying the site it would hold for many decades, finally to give way to the present Hotel Cleveland. On the south rim of the Square stood the National Hall, of four stories, with an opera house in its upper reaches.

The Courthouse of 1828 had been erased from the Square in 1858, the county then moving its administrative activities to the new building which stood until its recent demolition beside the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Building looking at the Square from the north. Though business had pretty largely taken possession of the space surrounding the Square, lower Superior Street stretching toward the river still retained importance as a shopping center. East of the Square, and particularly along Euclid Avenue, lay regions as yet uninvaded by the pursuits of commerce.

In 1861 the city council officially had changed the designation of the Public Square to Monumental Park, giving it a name supposedly more appropriate for a city of pretentious achievements. But the name did not stick. The people continued to use the original title and the council's meddlesomeness was forgotten. No less a figure in the community than Harvey Rice later suggested that the name of the Square be changed to Central Park.⁸ Happily, this suggestion like the other gained no popularity. Regardless of what the record at the City Hall shows, the Public Square remains by common acceptance that and nothing else.

Though it was generally agreed that the removal of the Courthouse from the Square was a great improvement in the appearance of the center of the city, restoring the area more nearly to the purpose that lay back of its original dedication, repeated efforts were made in succeeding years again to encumber the area with public buildings. The *Plain Dealer* opposed the idea of putting the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument where it now stands, arguing that a more appropriate site should be found and the Square left an open breathing place in the midst of a teeming city.⁹

When this suggestion was overruled, however, the *Plain Dealer* went far in the other direction. It insisted that since the state supreme court had decided the city of Cleveland "has control of the Public Square only as a trust delegated to it by the General Assembly and that the General Assembly can at any time and for any portion revoke the trust, reassume control and delegate it to some other body," the municipality should build its much-needed City Hall in one quarter of the Square lest the legislature give it to someone else.¹⁰ Later the *Plain Dealer* urged that the new Courthouse be built in one quarter of the Square, and a new library building in another quarter.¹¹

All this was prior to the birth of the Group Plan idea. Fortu-

⁸ *Plain Dealer*, July 23, 1886.

¹⁰ December 4, 1892.

⁹ August 25, 1892.

¹¹ March 13, 1895.

nately, better judgment prevailed and the Square has not again been encumbered with public buildings. In no case could the space available have been adequate for the uses of a million-peopled city. Courthouse, City Hall, and Public Library have found far better locations elsewhere.

Cleveland, with the other cities of Ohio, was in 1865 operating under the so-called uniform code adopted by the legislature in 1852. The measure was unsatisfactory and before its repeal in 1870 was many times amended to make it more workable. One difficulty, as Mayor Edward S. Flint had pointed out in 1863, was that the powers of municipal chief executives were so circumscribed that he could not exercise on the affairs of the community the authority which his constituents expected of him. This fault was corrected in part by revisions of the code, but the handicap of insufficient executive jurisdiction continued for five years beyond the war.

Though Republican Party strength ran strong throughout Ohio, as the war closed, Cleveland was already giving early signs of that independence in politics which was to become noteworthy in after years. The mayor first elected after Armstrong's arrival was Stephen Buhrer, a Democrat. The *Plain Dealer* in the years ahead played an important part in encouraging this spirit of political independence in the community.

Thus near the beginning of this era in Cleveland history, which Elroy M. Avery calls one of "remarkable development" for the city, the *Plain Dealer* under new ownership, a new proprietorship, and a new editorship made its fresh bid for public confidence and support. The man from Tiffin had a more difficult task ahead of him than he could have realized at the moment.

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM WIRT ARMSTRONG, RESUSCITATOR

*An old-school partisan editor who came in time to realize
the error of arguing politics when his readers
wanted news; city treasurer, post-
master, and Jacksonian.*

THE MAN called from Tiffin to revive the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* was already known to thousands of Ohio Democrats as a fighting partisan editor, a man as facile in speech as with his pen, recently completing a term as secretary of state for Ohio. He was to become a familiar figure in Cleveland for the remaining forty years of his life.

Though the proprietor of an Ohio Democratic newspaper throughout the Civil War, William Wirt Armstrong¹ had not committed the fearful error which John S. Stephenson made in relation to the *Plain Dealer*. He did not persistently antagonize his community by an anti-war policy. Had he done so, indeed, he would not have received the invitation to come to Cleveland in order to bring back to life the institution wrecked by Stephen-

¹ Armstrong went through life with the prefix "Major" to his name, but the source of the title was never explained. "The origin of Major Armstrong's military title," the *Leader* once said, "is one of the puzzles of the age — one of the things that this generation may have to leave unsettled for the next to wrestle with — Perhaps he is a major because he wears long chin whiskers and is the 'father,' as Mayor Blee expresses it, 'of the rooster'" (*Leader*, March 29, 1895).

son's folly, for that group of Democrats above Leutkemyer's hardware store had judgment, loyalty, and a sense of community responsibility. Nor would Mrs. Gray, the widow, or General A. S. Sanford, the administrator, have sanctioned such a disposal of the property.

Armstrong was born at New Lisbon, Ohio, March 18, 1833, the youngest son of John Armstrong, a prominent and influential citizen of Columbiana County. From 1847, when he was fourteen years of age, until 1886, when he retired from the editorship of the *Plain Dealer*, the son was continually identified with newspaper-making in Ohio.

In a letter written by William D. Morgan of New Lisbon to his friend John G. Breslin of Tiffin, dated March 5, 1847, is given a frank word picture of the future editor and proprietor:

Dear Breslin:

Your letter of the 26th ult., is received. Young Armstrong, of whom you desire information, is the son of one of our most estimable citizens and is a lad of uncommon capacity. He is about 14 years of age — is an excellent scholar, has picked up a fine stock of information, and has a natural business aptitude that fits him for almost any position in life. I have no doubt that by proper management on your part, he would prove to you a most valuable auxiliary. His disposition is such as to require more of firmness than severity, and an appeal to his heart would be more effective than an application to his back. Here, he has many boyish associations that it is well to break off before he grows older, and in guarding him from evil company in his new home your greatest trouble would be avoided. . . . An unfortunate turn in his father's affairs (a few years since) rendered it necessary for all the sons to abandon the hope of being "started in business." Hence their own good sense has taught them the necessity of striking out for themselves.

In conclusion, I can only repeat that William's mental abilities and intuitive aptitude for business are altogether above ordinary. Like all other boys, he doubtless may have faults. . . . I do not doubt that if you take this lad, he will find in you a *friend* as well as master. If I feared otherwise I would ask it at your hands as a favor to myself. I have not the pleasure of your good lady's acquaintance but I have assured Gen. Armstrong that if you are the

same Breslin you once were and your wife is after your own heart, little Billie will find under your roof a second home. In much haste,

Yours truly,
W. D. MORGAN

Young Armstrong made the connection at Tiffin which his sponsor thus sought for him, and years later the favor was to be returned when Armstrong brought Morgan to Cleveland to assume with him the joint proprietorship of the *Plain Dealer*.

So Armstrong became an apprentice in the office of the *Seneca Advertiser*, which he would one day own. He made so favorable an impression on his "master," Breslin, that when the latter became state treasurer he made Armstrong register of the bank department, though the young printer was then but nineteen years of age.

In 1854 Armstrong returned to Tiffin and purchased the *Advertiser*, thus entering on his majority and his editorial career practically together. Three years later he married Sara V., daughter of Josiah Hedges, founder of Tiffin, and that same year, 1857, became postmaster of the village by appointment of President Buchanan, continuing in the office until the Republicans moved into Washington. Unlike J. W. Gray, Armstrong was not a man to let loyalty to an anti-administration figure jeopardize his standing at the White House.

Mr. Morgan's "little Billie" was now launched on his politico-journalistic career. He came to Cleveland in 1859 with a committee of Tiffin Democrats to invite Stephen A. Douglas to visit the Seneca County capital for an address. The Senator accepted the invitation, and Gray accompanied him. In 1861 Armstrong was candidate for Ohio secretary of state, running against the ticket headed by David Tod, Union nominee for governor, but was defeated. In 1862, in better Democratic weather, he was elected to the office, serving through the second half of the Civil War.²

² Armstrong as secretary of state signed three commissions for William McKinley; as second lieutenant, as first lieutenant, and as captain.

Armstrong had not been long in Cleveland before the old lure of party service and reward became strong again. He was having trouble enough getting his new publishing enterprise going, but there seemed to be plenty of time for party affairs. The *Plain Dealer* office at Superior and Vineyard quickly became a party rallying point, as it had been in Gray's time. In half a dozen national conventions Armstrong sat as a delegate, sometimes from Cuyahoga County and sometimes from the state at large. In 1884 he was instrumental in throwing the Ohio delegation to Grover Cleveland, hastening his nomination, though Ohio had a candidate of its own in Allen G. Thurman. Armstrong was a member of the national committee from 1880 to 1884.

He declined a nomination for secretary of state in 1880 and for lieutenant governor the next year. He campaigned for the nomination for Congress in 1882, but withdrew his name in the convention and the honor went to Martin A. Foran, who was elected. He was made a member of Cuyahoga County's first Board of Elections in 1885; was elected city treasurer in 1891, defeated for county treasurer in 1893, and for city treasurer two years later.³ The list of offices for which he was "mentioned" from time to time constituted a perpetual recognition of his availability. A major disappointment of his life was that so rarely was there a Democratic majority to turn hopes into fruition.

Armstrong's crowning achievement in office-holding came in 1887, shortly after his retirement from the staff of the *Plain Dealer*, when President Cleveland appointed him postmaster. He was the sixth newspaper editor to hold the office. His selection was everywhere acclaimed as a fit recognition of the serv-

³ Armstrong's election as city treasurer was a personal triumph. He was the only Democrat chosen, successfully resisting the Republican sweep which carried William G. Rose, candidate for mayor, and all the rest of his ticket into office.

ices he had performed for the community and his party in northern Ohio.

The difficulties which confronted Armstrong were much like those with which J. W. Gray had to wrestle for much of the period of his control. Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, and the Reserve continued to vote strongly for the party which had conducted the war. In campaign after campaign the *Plain Dealer* found itself on the losing side. It had not yet lived down the reputation which Stephenson had given it. Neither the truculent *Leader* nor the less aggressive *Herald* intended to let the *Plain Dealer* forget its own past.

Said the *Leader*: "The Plain Dealer is beginning to appreciate the fact that its record during and since the war is one that will cover it with infamy when the principles which triumphed in the suppression of the rebellion are made secure and eternal in the government."⁴

At the outset Armstrong foresaw the difficulty and declared: "Being published in a locality where it receives neither city, county, state or national patronage, compelled as it were to carry the flag of the Democratic party within the very entrenchments of the political enemy, it [the *Plain Dealer*] must in a great measure be dependent upon the support of its political friends. . . ."⁵

The *Frémont Messenger* paid Armstrong this compliment: "As editor of an influential Democratic newspaper in a dark wilderness of Political Phariseism, during the darkest hour of our party's history, he labored constantly and unceasingly for the party when it was almost worth a man's life to say he was a Democrat."

Armstrong himself expressed much the same idea when, shortly after his retirement from the *Plain Dealer*, he wrote: "Publishing a Democratic paper in the Western Reserve in a

⁴ September 10, 1866.

⁵ April 26, 1865.

heated partisan fight required as much courage as that possessed by the crusader who, to redeem the Holy Land from the infidel, had to march over the sandy desert, face the hot blasts of the sirocco and be possessed of the endurance of the camel."

Never in Armstrong's life was this "Holy Land" quite "redeemed." If anyone could have accomplished the feat by means of printer's ink and limitless courage, the man from Tiffin would have achieved it.

For a time after taking over the *Plain Dealer* Armstrong divided his attention between Cleveland and Tiffin. He remained proprietor of the *Advertiser* until 1867, when he sold a half-interest to John M. Myers. In 1876 he sold the remaining half to John M. and E. S. Myers.⁶ Thereafter, his sole business interest was the *Plain Dealer*, and he made his home in Cleveland until his death in 1905.

It was Armstrong who gave the common barnyard rooster official standing as the emblem of the Democratic Party in Ohio. The adoption of the Australian ballot in the state seemed to require some symbol to stand at the head of each party column. The Republicans chose the eagle. As far back as 1841 the rooster had been used in many states, without specific authorization; originally, it is claimed, in Indiana.

When the question of adopting a Democratic Party emblem for the new Ohio ballot arose, the *Plain Dealer* urged that the American flag be used.⁷ In the state convention of 1891 Armstrong, who had retired from the paper five years before, was a delegate. He did not agree with his former colleagues. To the convention he said:

I think that we should adopt as the emblem of the Democratic party of Ohio the old game cock rooster. The Republicans will recognize that as our symbol and every man who ever voted the Democratic ticket can put his mark under the rooster. Republicans have adopted the eagle, the emblem of Emperor William of Germany. I

⁶ *Plain Dealer*, January 24, 1876.

⁷ June 18, 1891.



WILLIAM WIRT ARMSTRONG
Editor and Proprietor, 1865-85

THE PEACE DEALER
 THE WAR
 WAR DECLARED

...the President's message to Congress...
 ...the House of Representatives...
 ...the Senate...
 ...the President's message to Congress...
 ...the House of Representatives...
 ...the Senate...

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER
 THE WAR
 WAR DECLARED

...the President's message to Congress...
 ...the House of Representatives...
 ...the Senate...
 ...the President's message to Congress...
 ...the House of Representatives...
 ...the Senate...

DEALER.

16 PAGE. NO. 110.

WAR IS DECLARED.

The Fateful Measure is Adopted by Both Houses of Congress Without a Dissenting Voice.

Carried With a Cheer in the House, and After Only a Brief Debate in the Senate.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE PROMPTLY ACTED ON

The War Between the States is now a Debate in the Senate. The President's message to Congress is now a Debate in the Senate. The President's message to Congress is now a Debate in the Senate.

Special to the Plain Dealer.
 WASHINGTON, April 12. The news of the declaration of war between the United States and the Kingdom of Spain, which was announced by the President's message to Congress, was received with a cheer in the House of Representatives and after only a brief debate in the Senate.

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER. EXTRA

GREAT WAR IS ENDED; ARMISTICE IS SIGNED AND FIGHTING STOPS

KAISER FLEES INTO HOLLAND; REVOLT GROWS

HOSTILITIES CEASE TODAY AT 5 A. M. AS TRUCE IS ACCEPTED

WASHINGTON, Nov. 11.—Armistice terms have been signed. The state department announced at 2:50 o'clock this morning. The department's announcement simply said: "The armistice has been signed."

THE PRESIDENT GIVEN

THREE WARS AND A PEACE
 A study in Plain Dealer Headlines
 Declarations of war: (1) Mexican; (2) Civil; (3) Spanish; Armistice 1919

am for the game cock, the good old rooster, which has always been the Democratic symbol.

His suggestion was adopted, and ever since then the rooster of Democracy has stood proudly at the head of the party column at each state election in Ohio.

Chanticleer not only roosted on the ballot but came in flocks to the Democratic press. To the *Plain Dealer* he came in woodcuts, of sizes large and small, and no Democratic victory could be properly heralded without a plenitude of roosters scattered through the news columns, crowing the glad tidings to all the world. After an election like that of 1876, which was supposed to show Tilden elected president, the news pages of the *Plain Dealer* looked like a poultry poster with all the hens eliminated.

Armstrong lived through many political disappointments, but probably none to equal Tilden's loss of the presidency. For long after the 1877 inauguration, the man in the White House was, so far as the *Plain Dealer* was concerned, either "His Fraudulency" or "President" Hayes, the eloquent quotation marks in the latter instance bespeaking the editor's unalterable conviction that the Democratic candidate, rightfully elected, had been viciously counted out through Republican chicanery. That opinion was, of course, shared by scores of thousands of Democrats throughout the country.

A fundamental error in Armstrong's management of the *Plain Dealer* lay in his over-emphasis of politics. He continued to make the paper a partisan organ at a period when public opinion and the interest of newspaper readers in general were veering sharply away from principles in publication which had been accepted without question in Armstrong's youth. He had been brought up in a school no longer so popular as it had been.

Armstrong himself later realized his error in over-emphasizing the importance of partisan political discussion, but he did not discover it soon enough to do much about it. Years afterward in a column of reminiscences, discussing conditions in this period of the *Plain Dealer* story, Armstrong wrote: "Unfortu-

nately for the proprietor, perhaps, he felt it incumbent upon himself to occupy too much space in the discussion of party politics, and too little to the gathering of news.”⁸

Both the *Herald* and the *Leader* showed better judgment than the *Plain Dealer* in this regard. In at least one other respect, however, Armstrong was wiser than either of his competitors. He realized, as neither Cowles nor Benedict appeared to realize — but as Gray and Stephenson had begun to — that the character of Cleveland’s population, both racially and religiously, had changed sharply since the days which saw the advent of the *Leader*.⁹ He recognized, too, that in large part this new element in the population had a strong leaning toward the Democratic Party.

“To what depth of degradation will the Plain Dealer not descend,” remarked the *Leader*, “in order to curry favor with Catholic voters!”¹⁰

The same slant of mind is indicated by the *Leader’s* discussion of Armstrong on the occasion of his seeking a congressional nomination:

Mr. Armstrong has toadied to the saloon interests, the Catholic interests, the bumner element and smiled sweetly on the communist crowd, and if ever a man was entitled to favors from the Democracy on account of his dirty work, that man is W. W. Armstrong. He was a first-class Democratic copperhead, and as a demagogue he is unrivalled. . . . Major, our advice to you is, don’t run!¹¹

It is not to be assumed, however, that the routine of Armstrong’s days was controlled by the crow of his beloved roosters. He had interests other than political. He was a charter member

⁸ *Plain Dealer*, June 9, 1889.

⁹ A *Plain Dealer* editorial on July 20, 1863 defended the Cleveland Irish from the charge that they intended to resist conscription for war. The *Leader* denounced the “open alliance between the Democratic party and the Catholic church” (June 7, 1875) and was sure that “the Irish form a third of the Democratic party” (August 31, 1875).

¹⁰ July 17, 1871.

¹¹ September 2, 1882.

of the Union Club. Projects for the betterment of Cleveland had his active approval. He realized, as sagacious publishers must, that a paper's welfare cannot be dissociated from that of the community where it dwells.

Writing of Armstrong a few years after his retirement, J. H. A. Bone, the *Herald's* last editor, who remained to help guide the morning *Plain Dealer* in its early days, paid him this well-measured tribute:

The exigencies of partisan politics compel an editor to say and do many things which as a private citizen he would avoid, but Major Armstrong as an editor, no matter how great the strain of party obligations, never lost sight of the interests of Cleveland and could always be depended on to speak "the word in season" and to follow it up with action to the extent of his ability whenever the occasion demanded.¹²

Always a militant partisan, Armstrong was everywhere popular even among men who deprecated his politics and wished his paper nothing but bad luck. He was a clever after-dinner speaker, welcome in circles far removed from partisan counsels. Editors and cartoonists of the opposition press made merry with his personal traits, his short stature and his fiery auburn beard, and his political prophecies, usually unfulfilled, but his own good nature never faltered.¹³

Armstrong's retirement from the editorship of the paper he had guided through twenty years of tribulation came near the beginning of the second year following the disposal of his controlling interest in the property. The *Plain Dealer* bade him a friendly farewell:

In accordance with his own will, and pursuant to a pre-existing contract, Major W. W. Armstrong retires from the position of editor-in-chief of the PLAIN DEALER, but still retains a pecuniary interest in the company. His disassociation with the editorial management of

¹² October 15, 1893.

¹³ "The Bombastus Furiosa of Seneca street" was one of the *Leader's* many characterizations of Armstrong (July 16, 1875).

the paper, with which he has been for more than twenty years connected, is a matter of regret to his successors and colleagues who heartily wish him the success in any position of political or business life in which he may be placed that his superior merits deserve. The PLAIN DEALER is fortunate in the prospect of Major Armstrong's ready and brilliant pen being used in contributing to its columns from time to time as he may feel disposed, letters, reminiscences and other articles that will always be read with interest.¹⁴

No less cordial toward Armstrong was the comment of the always critical *Leader*:

An active journalistic career of thirty-nine years has fairly entitled him to a respite from the burden of responsibility attaching to the management of a newspaper. His retirement was due entirely to a desire to be relieved of the exacting duties of the position he has occupied so long and honorably. Mr. Armstrong's relations with the present owner of the Plain Dealer are of the most pleasant nature and though retiring from an active participation in the management he still retains a pecuniary interest in the paper. . . .

He is without doubt one of the best known Democratic editors in the country. The constant and spirited controversy between the *Leader* and Mr. Armstrong was due simply to his partisanship. . . . He has been a leading spirit in the political, business and social life of this city. . . . The part taken by Mr. Armstrong in the public affairs of the city would fill pages of a newspaper. . . .

Following his retirement, Armstrong wrote much for the paper he so long controlled. His columns of remembered history, particularly that relating to political events in Ohio, were widely read. He found time to travel and his letters from the South and the Far West were examples of excellent newspaper reporting.

Armstrong had the misfortune — if such it was — of living on in the community for years after his retirement from active work. Too many people had known him “when.” These years, nearly a score of them, covered the period of his postmastership and of his service as city treasurer. They covered, too, several

¹⁴ January 14, 1886.

unsuccessful quests for office. Armstrong was a familiar figure on the streets, personally as popular as ever, but as the years came on there was an element of pathos in the figure of the ex-publisher.

Charles E. Kennedy, for years a prominent newspaper man in Cleveland, gives a picture of Armstrong in his latter days in his volume of reminiscences *Fifty Years of Cleveland*:

His newspaper (the Plain Dealer) badly in debt, Armstrong had been glad to quit his activities and clear himself from the obligations he had accumulated over a series of years. Everybody who knew this plucky little journalist of the old school was sympathetic in the fate that overcame him in his declining years. His was an illustration of too much stress laid upon the political function of a newspaper.

This he afterward admitted and commented upon with much bitterness when in later years he frequently called on me in the Plain Dealer editorial rooms, where I was in charge. The "Major" — a perfectly gratuitous title he had long held in the community — enjoyed dropping in the office to look over the exchanges, sometimes carrying home a bundle of them for leisure examination. They were reminders to him of old editorial days, and I was always glad to observe how his eye would light up and part of the trembling leave his hands as he grasped and spread out a copy of some familiar daily visitor from the presses of another city.

On this occasion, early in Nineteen Hundred, he sat for a long while at my desk, finally saying to me in voice very husky and low: "Charlie, just thirty years ago today I came to Cleveland and bought the Plain Dealer. I was worth \$180,000 and at the end I found it pretty hard sledding. Today the old paper is worth many times that and the big reason is that you fellows are wise enough to keep politicians from dictating to you. . . .

On the occasion of his death, more than twenty years after his relinquishment of control of the *Plain Dealer*, the paper paid this tribute to its former editor and proprietor:

The death of Maj. W. W. Armstrong is the snapping of an interesting political and journalistic link with the past. . . . Maj. Armstrong, as a newspaper man and politician, was of the old school of which few representatives remain. As a newspaper worker he began

at the printing office case, and as a politician in the ranks at a time when a journalist was almost of necessity a politician. His labors in both fields were unceasing and his rewards large though never in proportion to his endeavors. He served the federal, state and city governments in various capacities and his name was known and his influence felt in the larger political field longer and more decisively than those of most men who achieve political prominence. . . .

Maj. Armstrong was endowed far above most men with the faculty of making friends. His genial personality, underlying which was a solid foundation of integrity, native wit and shrewdness, made him the most charming of companions. . . . He will long be remembered by his friends and associates for his many admirable traits and lovable personal qualities.¹⁵

¹⁵ April 22, 1905.

CHAPTER IV

PARTNERS AND ASSOCIATES

William D. Morgan and Frederick W. Green, in turn, own half interest in the Plain Dealer, but for most of the period Armstrong rules alone. Notable men on the staff.

IN a personal note signed by W. W. Armstrong nearly a year after his acquirement of the *Plain Dealer*, the editor announced:

I have this day sold and transferred one-half interest in the Cleveland Plain Dealer to Hon. Wm. Duane Morgan, formerly auditor of state and for many years connected with the Democratic press of Ohio. . . . It is a source of gratification to me to state that the patronage of the Plain Dealer from the day it passed into my hands until the present hour has been steadily on the increase and that the paper is on the high road to permanent success.¹

Armstrong had found that more money was needed to keep the paper attuned to its opportunities than he could himself command. The *Leader* and the *Herald* were enlarging, adding new features and giving other evidences of prosperity, and their Democratic competitor must do no less.

William Duane Morgan was an elder brother of Brigadier General George W. Morgan, who served in the Texas war for independence and in the Mexican War, and who in the first

¹ March 1, 1866.

year of the Civil War was given command of a brigade of volunteers.²

Both brothers were born at Washington, Pennsylvania, grandsons of William Duane, who edited the *Aurora* at Philadelphia during the Jefferson administration and for years thereafter.³ The grandfather's namesake came to Ohio in 1840 and bought the *Ohio Patriot* at New Lisbon, continuing its publication until 1852. At that time he was elected auditor of state, being the first chosen by popular vote to that office under the new constitution. After one term as auditor Morgan moved to Newark and bought the *Advocate*.

From Newark he accepted Armstrong's invitation to take a half-interest in the *Plain Dealer*. This connection was to be brief, and it cannot be said that Morgan added much to either the fame or the prosperity of the paper. He belonged to the same old-school political persuasion which was already putting its mark on Armstrong's conduct of the enterprise. He was as unaware of the new day as was Armstrong himself.

A little more than a year after the announcement of Morgan's coming to the *Plain Dealer*, the paper reluctantly called attention to his withdrawal on account of ill health.⁴ In a personal note the same day Morgan declared:

It is unnecessary for me to say to those familiar with the *Plain Dealer* for the past two years that the paper under Mr. Armstrong will continue in the hands of a gentleman eminently able to render it useful, efficient, entertaining and popular. Whilst he devotes his time and talents to the maintenance of the organ, of which the Democracy of northern Ohio may be proud, every friend of the establishment should be careful to make that friendship active and

² Whitelaw Reid in his *Ohio in the War* calls Morgan a "Democratic politician" best remembered for "his evacuation of Cumberland Gap." Under President Polk he served successively as consul and minister to Portugal. He was Democratic candidate for governor in 1865.

³ The *Aurora* was a violent anti-British organ of the Republican (now Democratic) Party and a spokesman for Jefferson.

⁴ March 28, 1867.

beneficial. Let the interest and good-will of its friends continue to be testified in constant increasing additions to its subscription list.

The *Herald*, "regretting" to note Morgan's retirement, said he had "edited the Plain Dealer with great ability and perfect fairness, and, while we do not approve his political views, we do respect and commend the candor and courtesy displayed in their advocacy. . . ."⁵

Reminiscing of and in the *Plain Dealer* years later, Armstrong said of Morgan, who had then just died: "My senior in years and at that time having much more experience than I in public affairs, I was sorry to part with him. He was the most industrious man I ever knew in journalism, although not so ready a writer as many others before and since connected with the Plain Dealer."⁶

After leaving Cleveland, Morgan reassumed control of the *Newark Advocate*. He again retired to Washington, Pennsylvania, in 1885.

In the month succeeding Morgan's entrance on his copartnership with Armstrong what seems now an odd experiment was undertaken. On a day in April the *Plain Dealer* appeared, increased in size from seven to eight columns.⁷ Thereafter for weeks the width of the paper varied from day to day. The purchaser never knew from one edition to the next whether he would get seven columns or eight. After a few weeks, however, the novelty seems to have lost its hold on the management and eight columns became standard, as it was with the other Cleveland papers.⁸

When Judge Hiram V. Willson of the federal district court

⁵ March 29.

⁶ March 27, 1887.

⁷ April 7, 1866.

⁸ The same policy was tried again in 1893. It was designed, the paper said (October 2), for the sake of flexibility: "Almost at the moment of going to press the width of the paper can be changed. . . . Such elasticity in the matter of size is not possible in any other Ohio newspaper office."

retired in 1867, a future *Plain Dealer* associate and a past associate left their posts with him. One was Frederick W. Green, clerk of the court, and the other was James D. Cleveland, his deputy. Cleveland had been associate editor under Gray. Green would within a few weeks become half-owner of the paper with Armstrong, thus taking the place of Morgan, recently resigned.

The *Plain Dealer* announced on June 3, 1867 that Frederick W. Green "has this day purchased a half-interest in the Plain Dealer and will be associated with Mr. Armstrong in its editorial management." The association was to continue for nearly seven years and covered an important period in the story of the paper.

Green was born in Frederick, Maryland, in 1816 and moved to Tiffin in the year of Armstrong's birth, 1833. He became interested in Democratic politics at once and served six years as auditor of Seneca County. First elected to Congress from the Tiffin district in 1850, he served two terms, stepping from the national house to the federal court clerkship in Cleveland. In Cleveland he was to identify himself actively with party politics.

He thus brought to his service on the *Plain Dealer* much the same background as that of Armstrong himself and of his earlier partner, Morgan. All three had been trained in practical politics; all had been Democratic office-holders. They were in complete agreement that, as Morgan wrote, "each succeeding year has confirmed the conviction that the active existence of that [the Democratic] party is a necessity to a free government."⁹

Green was the kind of partner Armstrong was certain to have sought. He was not the kind the *Plain Dealer*, trying to re-establish itself in a community politically hostile, most needed at that period.

Green retired as co-editor and co-proprietor with Armstrong on February 5, 1874. In his farewell, the departing partner said:

Much may be allowed to the Democratic editor contending against the overwhelming Republican majorities in the Western Reserve.

⁹ *Plain Dealer*, March 8, 1866.

To publish a paper in a portion of the state where three-quarters of the population are in accord with its political principles is comparatively easy work, but to do so when the sentiments of a large majority of the voters are on the other side requires, to say the least, considerable nerve and patience, combined with a good deal of hard work.¹⁰

After leaving the paper because of his impaired health, Green remained a resident of Cleveland. He was one of Ohio's commissioners to the Centennial Exposition, and in 1878 was given the political appointment of state inspector of oil.

At his death, on June 18, 1879, the *Plain Dealer* pointed out that Cleveland was indebted to Green "for his successful efforts [in Congress] for the passage of the act creating the new judicial district, under which the United States courts were after 1855 held for the northern district of Ohio in this city. . . . We can truly say that we do not believe he ever wittingly wronged a single soul."

Thus in Armstrong's nearly twenty years' control of the *Plain Dealer* he was sole editor and publisher for all but eight of them. Even though William Duane Morgan and Frederick W. Green were in succession half-owners of the paper, they both bowed to the wishes of the younger man who invited them into the partnership. The paper was what Armstrong made it, regardless of who were partners or associates.

The *Plain Dealer* was fortunate in the quality of men who came to it under Armstrong and remained through stormy weather as well as fair. George Hoyt was one such associate. He came to the paper under Gray, left it to join the Union army, and returned to it after Armstrong assumed control.

When the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company was organized in 1877, Hoyt became vice president. Next to Armstrong, he owned more stock in the company than any other individual. Hoyt was a type of the thoroughly trained and all-round experienced newspaper man capable of doing anything about the plant which day-to-day exigencies required.

¹⁰ February 10, 1874.

Another of Armstrong's men of note was Nelson S. Cobleigh. Born at Wilbraham, Massachusetts, in 1845, he came to Cleveland in 1867 and after two years with the *Leader* joined the *Plain Dealer* under the copartnership of Armstrong and Green. He remained with the paper until 1890, serving it many years as city editor and finally as associate editor. Cobleigh was vice president of the city council and a member of the councilmanic committee which fixed the site of the eastern terminus of the old Superior viaduct.

In 1890 he left Cleveland and spent the rest of his thirty-five years in newspaper work on the staff of the *New York World*. Mr. Cobleigh was a man of fine literary attainments, in recognition of which fact he was given honorary degrees by Yale and Wesleyan Universities. He died on March 3, 1927.

A notable member of the staff during the last years of the Armstrong regime was Gilbert W. Henderson, who, recommended to the proprietor as the "best all-around newspaper man in the state,"¹¹ came to the *Plain Dealer* as telegraph editor in 1880. "For political purposes," Armstrong wrote Henderson, he was turning the *Plain Dealer* from an evening to a morning paper and wanted Henderson on the staff.

The morning edition lasted nearly eight months and was said at the time to have cost the owner forty thousand dollars. Cleveland already had two morning papers and was in no receptive mood for a third one, especially if it were Democratic. Armstrong claimed he had been promised substantial support which was not forthcoming when needed. Henderson stayed on. When the paper was sold a few years later, he proved useful in helping the new administration learn the routine of publication.

Henderson was born at Cadiz, Ohio, in 1850 and died in Cleveland before he was thirty-nine.¹² He first taught school for a time, but in 1877 began work on the *Columbus Journal*. He was a co-founder and co-proprietor of the *Columbus Capital*,

¹¹ Armstrong, in the *Plain Dealer*, August 11, 1889.

¹² Born October 13, 1850; died August 7, 1889.

a weekly, but the venture failed. Three years later he was ready to accept the telegraph editorship of the *Plain Dealer*.

He was writing editorials when the Armstrong period came to an end and the Holden group took possession. In 1886 he was news editor. After the change of ownership Armstrong remained for one year as editor in order, the *Leader* said, to tutor R. R. Holden for the job.¹³ At the end of the year, however, the *Leader* declared the tutoring was not as yet successful and Henderson was shifted to the teacher's role, becoming for the time the real editor of the paper.¹⁴

Henderson was a Democrat after Armstrong's own heart, but, unlike the proprietor, was a gentle, scholarly man, disinclined to put himself forward among his fellows. He was by conviction a free-trader and active in association with the Cleveland Free Trade Club. He was also first president of the Cleveland Press Club, which survived only a short time. Yet about the office he was called "the lone fisherman" because of a certain aloofness which seemed part of his nature.¹⁵

On his retirement from the staff because of ill health in 1889, the *Plain Dealer* said of Henderson:

He is a forcible writer and, being well-informed on matters political and general, his contributions were widely read and appreciated. His genius shone through all his writings and gave them an individual coloring which was readily recognized by those who were familiar with his style.¹⁶

Regarding another of his associates, Armstrong once recalled: "I had as assistant editor at first a queer old chap, an ex-Universalist preacher, by the name of L. S. Everett, who did good

¹³ Roman R. Holden was a brother of Liberty E. Holden.

¹⁴ January 31, 1886.

¹⁵ Armstrong in the *Plain Dealer*, August 8, 1889.

¹⁶ January 6. To a later generation the name Henderson of the *Plain Dealer* has meant not Gilbert W. but Gilbert W.'s son, Charles T. Henderson, who came to the paper in 1901, became city editor, dramatic critic, and Sunday editor in turn and left about the time America got into the World War; a popular figure in Cleveland newspaper circles.

work, but was slower than a snail and could not be driven out of his 'ruts.' He was a perfect writing machine. Give him any subject and he would go at it slowly and prosily, yet would grind out something readable and interesting." In October 1866 he had started publication of the *Lorain Constitutionalist* at Elyria. He left the *Plain Dealer* in January 1869, to take charge of the *Akron City Times*.

William J. Gleason retired from the *Plain Dealer* in August 1882, after twenty-one years in various capacities, the last few as circulator. He was one of the incorporators of the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company and a member of its first board of directors. Gleason was the first to suggest the erection of the present Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument on the Public Square and was chairman of the commission appointed by Governor Joseph B. Foraker to carry out the project. He was secretary of Cuyahoga County's first Board of Elections, set up in 1886.

Thomas R. and David S. Whitehead and William J. Gleason were among the many *Plain Dealer* men to enlist for service in the Civil War. After the peace all three of them returned to the paper and continued with it for many years. Thomas R. Whitehead became business manager and was, like Gleason, an incorporator and original director of the company organized in 1877 to publish the *Plain Dealer*. When "Prof" King's balloon ascended from the Public Square in 1874, with the whole downtown area packed with people to see the spectacle, Whitehead was one of those to wave from the basket as it moved toward the lake. The balloon landed in Michigan after a twelve-hour flight. Whitehead became clerk of the Board of Education and had the distinction of a compliment from the Republican *Herald*. He left the *Plain Dealer* in 1877 when it became evident that his job at school headquarters would require all his time.

Frederick T. Wallace, Cleveland attorney, writer, traveler, and poet, was a frequent contributor to the *Plain Dealer* in the Armstrong days. In the exciting presidential campaign of 1876 the *Leader* said he was writing *Plain Dealer* editorials and was

paid from a fund furnished by Samuel J. Tilden, Democratic candidate.¹⁷

The story of a newspaper is to be read both in the policies it advocates, in the general character it maintains in the community and in the personalities identified with it from time to time. In the period of Armstrong's control of the *Plain Dealer*, the editorial and business staffs of the three leading Cleveland papers included many men of character and ability whose services to the community too often went unrecognized. The *Plain Dealer* had its liberal share of them. Many of those then employed by the *Herald* would soon find their way to the payroll of the paper which the *Herald* had fought for forty years.

¹⁷ October 21.

CHAPTER V

RECONSTRUCTION POLITICS AND POLICIES

*The Plain Dealer supports Lincoln's views on the war amendments. Greeley gives paper a "dish of crow."
Sorrow with Tilden; triumph with Cleveland.*

THE OVERSHADOWING issues which occupied all newspapers in the few years immediately following Armstrong's purchase of the *Plain Dealer* were those involved in Reconstruction. Andrew Johnson became President ten days before the new proprietor assumed direction of the paper. There began almost at once the bitter conflict between Congress and the President which was to bring about, as one of its evil fruits, Johnson's impeachment and trial.

The *Plain Dealer*, as would be supposed, did not hesitate to throw its support to the President. The Democratic state convention had declared:

The one great question of the day is the immediate and unconditional restoration of all the states to the exercise of their rights within the federal government, and under the constitution, and (be it resolved that) we will cordially and actively support Andrew Johnson as president of the United States in all necessary and proper methods to carry out his policy as directed to that end.

Yet to the *Leader* the conduct of its Democratic contemporary was only a further sign of its moral degeneracy, the logical continuation of the *Plain Dealer's* course before and during the late war.

"The degrading copperheadism of the Plain Dealer can be accounted for," the *Leader* said soon after Green's coming to the paper, "by the fact that the editor Fred Green was one of the 'dogs' from Ohio who voted for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854."¹

The *Leader's* own attitude was indicated by its comment a little later that "Lee (Robert E.) and Arnold (Benedict) were both traitors and both Democrats and therefore equally entitled to a place among the Plain Dealer's heroes."² And again: "If Wilkes Booth were alive . . . we should find the Plain Dealer advocating his pardon."³

This was the political atmosphere in which William W. Armstrong and the *Plain Dealer* found themselves, as the problems of Reconstruction gripped Ohio and the Reserve.⁴ The *Leader* had criticized the radical Republican proposal for impeachment of the President,⁵ but, once the program was decided on, threw its support to the purpose of ousting him. The *Herald*, whose editor was postmaster of Cleveland by appointment of Johnson, was at first no less outspoken against impeachment. "We are satisfied," it said, "that as a measure of policy at least, the great majority of the American people are opposed to an attempted

¹ September 30, 1867. The epithet "dog" was applied by the abolitionist press to the three Ohioans in Congress who voted for the repeal. They were Disney, Olds, and Green, whose initial letters happened to spell the word.

² January 7, 1871.

³ December 31, 1868.

⁴ Some idea of the intensity of feeling in Cleveland at this period is indicated by the oft-told incident of the old Courthouse cornerstone. J. J. Husband, the architect who designed the building and had his name cut in the stone, was an anti-war Democrat. After Lincoln's murder he made some remark to a group of friends which showed he did not share the general feeling of horror at the crime. A mob began to gather as soon as the incident was whispered about, and Husband had to flee for his life. Before the day Lincoln's body lay in state on the Public Square, on its way to the final resting place in Illinois, the architect's name was chiseled from the Courthouse cornerstone.

⁵ January 17, 1867.

impeachment of our chief magistrate and, should the House of Representatives in an evil hour be hurried into such a proceeding, it will be in violation of the wishes and sober convictions of their constituents.”⁶

The *Plain Dealer* alone in the local newspaper field defended the President against his detractors and condemned the radical Republicans in Congress for their effort to convict him. In fact, it is doubtful if there was another prominent editor in the country who earlier or more accurately than Armstrong appraised the destructive purposes of the radicals of both parties then ready to use the distresses of the South for their own personal or partisan advantage. Two years before the Johnson impeachment the paper had declared:

Andrew Johnson has refused to become the pliant tool of the bloodthirsty radicals — he has set his face steadily against the malignity of that faction who dream of nothing but conquered provinces, dead states, confiscation, disfranchisement and Negro suffrage.⁷

Of the President’s formal reply to his assailants in Congress the *Plain Dealer* said: “We do not hesitate to say that this answer to the frivolous charges trumped up by the impeachers is not only candid and evidently truthful, but absolutely unanswerable. . . .”⁸

Editor-Postmaster Benedict, writing from the capital, now confirmed the truth of what Republican papers had been denying: that there was in progress a rush of carpetbaggers to Washington seeking promises of office from the expected occupant of the White House.⁹

Still, on the President’s acquittal, the *Herald* was constrained to remark that “the Republican party has done its duty. A few

⁶ April 27, 1868.

⁷ February 20, 1866.

⁸ March 24, 1868.

⁹ Noted by the *Plain Dealer* on April 27, 1868. The “expected occupant” was, of course, Benjamin F. Wade of Ohio, president pro tempore of the Senate.

individual Republicans — let God judge their motives — have disappointed the loyal hearts of the country, and have dug their own political graves.”¹⁰

The manager of the impeachment proceedings was Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania. The sharp division of local sentiment over the fight on Johnson is well illustrated by the contrasting opinions regarding him expressed by the *Plain Dealer* and the *Leader*.

In the judgment of the *Plain Dealer* Stevens was an “old law-defying buccaneer.”¹¹ The *Leader* held him to be “the most unique, single-hearted and heroic figure of these post-revolutionary days . . . the noblest statesman, the most irresistible debater, the most influential intellect, the foremost friend of freedom in the halls of congress.”¹²

Armstrong was a delegate from the Sandusky congressional district to the widely advertised convention at Philadelphia, called by conservative Republicans and Democrats in the summer of 1868 in an attempt to check the radical policies taking form at Washington against the South. The *Plain Dealer* afterward said of the convention:

Without stopping to state exceptions, it may be said that the convention as a whole was characterized by wisdom and sagacity and that the points embraced in its platform show that it was composed of practical men who wisely confined themselves to the living issues of today, neither casting an eye needlessly to the rear nor foolishly introducing topics that may well be left to the future. . . .¹³

Three great constitutional amendments were fruit of the famous apple tree at Appomattox. The first of them, abolishing slavery, was proposed while Lincoln was still alive, and had his hearty approval. The other two were submitted after his death.

¹⁰ May 18, 1868.

¹¹ February 18, 1868.

¹² August 12, 1868.

¹³ August 17, 1866. For discussion of the Philadelphia convention, see *The Age of Hate*, by George Fort Milton.

It is the opinion of Burton J. Hendrick, expressed in his work on the Constitution entitled *Bulwark of the Republic*, that Lincoln's "principles, frequently set forth in public speeches, would have led him to oppose them both. . . . He was opposed to Negro suffrage."

The *Plain Dealer* made no issue against the Thirteenth Amendment to abolish slavery, believing the issue to have been settled by the war. "We accept the edict," it said, "as a part of the great mystery of this eventful period and shall await with solemn hope and not without some anxiety the result it is to develop. . . ." ¹⁴

When the Ohio Legislature at the beginning of the 1867 session voted to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment, the *Plain Dealer*, though opposed to the policy, did not deem the action worthy of editorial comment. This amendment, of course, established Negro citizenship and was generally recognized as the forerunner of a grant of suffrage. However, against the third war amendment, the Fifteenth conferring suffrage, the paper made strong but futile resistance.

Thus the attitude of the *Plain Dealer* was identical with that which Hendrick believes would have been that of Abraham Lincoln had he lived.

Ohio's own attitude toward the suffrage amendment was hesitant and at the time hardly convincing. In May 1868 the legislature, perhaps guided by the popular verdict the year before against a proposal to confer state suffrage on the Negro, voted against ratification of the federal proposal. In January two years later it voted to ratify the Fifteenth Amendment, by a margin of one vote in each branch.

The position of the *Plain Dealer* was one of consistent opposition to the granting of Negro suffrage so soon after slavery. After the vote of ratification at Columbus, which it argued was illegal in view of the previous rejection, it declared:

¹⁴ February 1, 1865.

Ohio now stands by the action of her legislature in favor of negro suffrage, although the people by a majority of over fifty thousand declared against it. The responsibility of the adoption of the amendment rests upon the so-called Hamilton county reform members, whose constituents two years ago rejected it by nearly five thousand majority. We do not say that these men have been bought up, but if the names of some of them do not appear among the list of Government appointments before their terms expire we will be much mistaken. . . .¹⁵

Before the Fifteenth Amendment was officially made a part of the Constitution, the *Plain Dealer*, perhaps in order to keep its own record straight, offered this comment on a fact then all but completed:

We are not shutting our eyes to what is manifestly true, that negro equality is a stubborn and practically accomplished fact; neither do we say the right is not on the side of the negro; but we desire to show that the African has obtained his political recognition through the drift of chance circumstance, and not through a revulsion of popular feeling in his favor. . . .¹⁶

Throughout Johnson's difficulties with a Republican Congress the *Plain Dealer* stood energetically with the President. On the occasion of his death it ventured the prophetic suggestion that "Andrew Johnson's character will improve in the popular estimation with the advancement of time."¹⁷

The Ohio Democracy's formal and complete acceptance of the results of the war came in the form of a resolution adopted by the state convention at the beginning of June 1871. Strange as it may seem, the prime mover in the new policy was Clement L. Vallandigham, the best friend a rebellious South had had in all the North. That Armstrong of the *Plain Dealer* had a hand in the party's change of attitude is clear.

In a letter Vallandigham sent the *Plain Dealer* editor, dated at Dayton, January 1, 1871, he welcomed the occasion ten days

¹⁵ January 21, 1870.

¹⁶ March 11, 1870.

¹⁷ July 31, 1875.

thence for discussing matters with him. "It is full time," he wrote, "that we have a general talk and a *re*-understanding with each other as of yore." In mid-May Vallandigham put through the Montgomery County convention a resolution foreshadowing one to be adopted the following month by the state convention.

Between the two conventions the *Plain Dealer* published an editorial which said:

The Democratic party persistently opposed the reconstruction acts, the establishment of military despotism in the South, the subordination of the civil to the military power, and have insisted that the amendments referred to were effected by force and fraud. It seems to us that the Democratic party have done all in their power to do on the subject, and should hereafter treat those acts, although revolutionary, yet as consummated, and therefore beyond the reach of legitimate political controversy.¹⁸

This was not only a long step away from the Stephenson attitude maintained during most of the period of the war, but it pretty accurately foretold what the state convention would declare when it gathered less than two weeks later. Vallandigham was chairman of the resolutions committee and Armstrong was a member. The two joined in the majority report which the delegates adopted. The resolution said: "We recognize as accomplished facts the three amendments to the constitution, recently adopted, and regard the same as no longer issues before the country."

So dropped the curtain on the drama of Ohio Democracy's opposition to the war. It was Vallandigham's last political gesture. In a few weeks he was dead.

Politically, the history of the *Plain Dealer* during the Armstrong regime was that of a paper pledged in advance to support whatever candidates Democratic conventions would name and whatever principles they would enunciate. Armstrong was usually a delegate; often an influential one.

The *Plain Dealer's* choice for the 1868 nomination for presi-

¹⁸ May 22, 1871.

dent as the national convention approached was George H. Pendleton of Ohio, who had been the candidate for vice president on the McClellan ticket and later was a United States Senator. After the convention, however, the paper was ready to acclaim Seymour's nomination "with unfeigned satisfaction."¹⁹

In 1872 the paper was given the excruciatingly bitter dose of having to support for president a man whom it had ridiculed, fought in the courts, and generally denounced almost since its first appearance thirty years earlier. A convention of Liberal, anti-Grant Republicans nominated Horace Greeley for president in May. The Democratic convention met in July. The *Plain Dealer* offered some resistance, but not much, to the general move among Democrats to endorse the ticket which the Liberals had named. "We do not consider the Democracy committed to the action of that [the Cincinnati] convention," it declared.²⁰ But when the Baltimore convention concurred in the Cincinnati nominations, the *Plain Dealer* put everything it had into its support of Greeley.

If 1872 gave the paper its hardest test of party loyalty, the succeeding presidential election gave it the severest disappointment. Ohio's candidate for the nomination had been Allen G. Thurman, but Tilden was accepted as amply qualified for the office. All the preliminary signs indicated a Democratic victory in November.

Convinced that their candidate for president had won, Cleveland Democrats threw restraint to the winds on election night and the day succeeding. In and around the *Plain Dealer* Building at Seneca and Frankfort Streets they noisily welcomed the cheering news. Interminable speeches were extemporized. Horns blared and throats grew sore from yelling. Editor Armstrong found little time for work. With his more important associates he was kept busy from morning till twilight and far into

¹⁹ July 9, 1868.

²⁰ May 4, 1872.

the second night responding in kind to the wild rejoicing of his friends.

It was the first time since 1856 that the *Plain Dealer* had found itself on the popular side of a presidential contest, and even that earlier victory had turned to Dead Sea fruit when Editor Gray found it necessary to break with Buchanan at the cost of the only federal office any *Plain Dealer* proprietor had ever had.

As events proved, of course, the Tilden celebration was noise without substance. Though the Democratic Governor of New York had received a quarter-million plurality of the popular vote, he lost the presidency through the device of an electoral commission set up without constitutional sanction and controlled from the start by Republicans.

It was a bitter dose for Democrats everywhere. To Armstrong and the *Plain Dealer* it was a disappointment never quite forgotten.

The second day after the election the *Plain Dealer* printed this editorial:

“IF”

If the *Plain Dealer* uncooped its roosters prematurely Wednesday we were fully justified by the returns. The Herald and Leader admitted that Tilden was elected, and “if” he is not elected we will never again take any stock in statements they publish. Hayes is elected “if” he has carried all the doubtful states. Tilden is elected “if” he has carried either Florida, South Carolina, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Oregon or Nevada! That little “if” stands at this writing like a monstrous giant in the way of both parties. We believe, however, that Tilden is elected, and will not surrender the hope until the last vote is officially counted.²¹

For weeks the result was in doubt, the Democrats stoutly claiming the victory. Years later the paper printed an editorial under the caption: “The Crime of 1876,” saying: “If Samuel J. Tilden had said the word, he would have had at his back the greatest army this country had ever known and the land would have been plunged into a civil war that would have placed him

²¹ November, 9, 1876.

in the presidency, to which he had been fairly and honorably elected.”²²

As the campaign of 1880 approached, Democrats widely believed that, because of the feeling engendered by the bitterness of four years before, they had an excellent chance of electing the next president. The *Plain Dealer* favored the nomination of Henry B. Payne of Cleveland, although Allen G. Thurman was again considered a possibility.²³ A few years later Armstrong was to write that Payne would have won “had it not been for the selfishness and churlishness of friends of the ‘Old Roman’ [Thurman] who, if they could not nominate him, would not allow any other Ohio Democrat to be honored.”²⁴

The year before, the *Plain Dealer*, in supporting the suggestion of Payne, had warned the party against the nomination of Hancock, since Grant was the probable Republican nominee and it would not do to name a general of inferior rank to oppose one of Grant’s higher rank.²⁵

Grant, of course, was not nominated. Payne received eighty-one votes on the first ballot at Cincinnati, and then dropped out of the contest. Once Hancock was named, the *Plain Dealer* gave him its customary cordial support, though it knew after October, Armstrong said afterward, that he had no chance to win.

The *Plain Dealer* accepted the result of the election and Hancock’s defeat with its customary philosophy. The experience, even if painful, was at least familiar.

On the morning after the election, with the cut of an upside-down rooster to indicate the party’s distress, the editor told the sorrowful news of the day before. Dispatches from far and near were printed below a single-column headline which ran half-way down the first page:

²² November 14, 1891.

²³ Payne was one of the most prominent of that galaxy of Cleveland public men who wrote the city’s history of the second half of the last century. He was the city’s first clerk and city attorney and a member of each branch of Congress in turn.

²⁴ January 31, 1886.

²⁵ November 11, 1879.

OUR ADDRESS

Is Still up That Familiar Old Salty
Rivulet, Dear Friends.

Secure Your Tickets Early, Brethren, and
Let Us Away to the Spot Where We
Have Lingered Lo, These Many Moons.

To Republicanism: We Acknowl-
Another Four Years' Lease.

WHERE ARE WE

Is the Query of the Hour and Echo
Answers "What Are We?"

This is a Conundrum That has Been Pro-
pounded to Us for Twenty Long,
Weary Years,

But You Can Bet Your Life We
Don't Give it up Yet.

IF AT FIRST

We Don't Catch On, Why Once
Again the Armor Don

And Sail in With that Determination Born
of a Consciousness That We
Are in the Right.

In Democracy Where There is so
Much Life There is Always Hope.

HULLO HERE!

It Might be Well to Wait Until
the Returns are all in.

Hancock's Majority Gradually But Surely
Growing Larger in New
York City.

A Possibility of New York, New
Jersey and Other States After all.

WAIT! WATCH!

Toward James A. Garfield, the successful candidate of 1880, the men of the *Plain Dealer* maintained the most cordial relations. Armstrong wrote that he often dropped into the office to chat with the editors; that he was a *Plain Dealer* subscriber almost till the hour he assumed the presidency. The day after the Garfield funeral General Hancock came to Armstrong's office to pay his respects to this stalwart outpost of Democracy, and many Clevelanders came there to greet him.²⁶

The mid-term election of 1882 foreshadowed the long-delayed Democratic triumph which put a Democrat in the White House for the first time since before the Civil War. Armstrong's love of roosterdom was for once given complete expression. The *Plain Dealer* announced the general election result by a first page completely covered by a single magnificent specimen of the barnyard egotist. Expressive of additional exultation were twenty-two roosters on the editorial page, twenty-three on page 8, and six on page 5.²⁷

The *Leader* loyally chided its exuberant contemporary for making such a "barnyard display"!

Democrats were generally of the opinion that the Republican Party was done for. "Rotten to the very core, it has crumbled before the gale of popular opinion and lies in hopeless ruin," declared the *Plain Dealer*.²⁸

Democrats had swept Ohio in the 1883 elections, assuring the naming of an anti-administration senator. Though Pendleton was a candidate to succeed himself, the *Plain Dealer* early declared for Payne and he was chosen. The *Delaware Herald* insisted that Armstrong had been "totally demoralized and rendered useless for the future" by his support of this Standard Oil attorney.

The *Plain Dealer's* objections to Pendleton were chiefly that he had fathered a civil service measure which the paper called

²⁶ *Plain Dealer*, January 31, 1886.

²⁷ November 8, 1882.

²⁸ November 8, 1882.

a "sham and fraud," and that he had voted to confirm the appointment of Stanley Matthews to the United States Supreme Court.²⁹

Among the first of the papers to recognize the availability of Grover Cleveland for the presidential nomination in 1884 was the *Plain Dealer*.³⁰ Nevertheless, as the 1884 campaign approached, its first choice was Samuel J. Tilden. In Ohio there was still talk of Thurman, but the *Plain Dealer* said afterward that his nomination was recognized as impossible and unwise. "He was a state favorite, and nothing more."³¹ As for its old preference, Payne, he was now ready to step into the Senate and "does not wish to be a candidate for president."³²

The *Plain Dealer's* support of Cleveland against Blaine was of the usual sort. Its acclamation of the Democratic victory was hardly less enthusiastic than had been its acceptance of Tilden's supposed triumph eight years earlier. Now there could be no doubt. For the first time in nearly thirty years a nominee for president supported by the *Plain Dealer* had actually won.

It was a thoroughly delightful but unfamiliar position in which the *Plain Dealer* found itself. Two days after the election the editor apologized to his readers: "The public will have to excuse the brevity of editorials in this paper. The *Plain Dealer* sanctum, the counting room and the streets before the office have been crowded since Wednesday a. m. with so many jubilant Democrats that it has been an utter impossibility to write editorials."³³

The election of Cleveland indicated, for one thing, that the next Cleveland postmaster would be William W. Armstrong. The editor could not well ignore that fact.

Though politics furnished the main newspaper fare from day to day, there were plenty of other topics to command attention. The *Plain Dealer* argued for the direct election of president and

²⁹ January 10, 1883.

³⁰ October 11, 1882.

³¹ July 14, 1884.

³² February 19, 1884.

³³ November 7.

vice president and the abolition of the electoral college.³⁴ After Hayes had wrested the presidency from Tilden its belief in the evil possibilities of the college was intensified.

As early as 1851 the paper had insisted that the United States should clean up Cuba and then annex her.³⁵ With something bordering on prophecy it declared in 1873 that unless conditions on the island should soon improve, "there is nothing for the United States but to adopt energetic measures protecting their citizens and defending the national flag. Such a course would most likely render a war with Spain inevitable and end in the annexation of Cuba."³⁶

Toward the proposal of President Grant to annex Santo Domingo, however, the attitude of the paper was different. Here it opposed annexation. The *Leader* said it was because Armstrong objected to adding any new "Negro or hybrid races to the population."³⁷ The *Leader* itself differed with the president on this question.³⁸

It is a familiar partisan taunt that the party in power is likely to have the most enthusiasm for civil service; that the outs are usually strongest in their opposition. Civil service became a sharp issue in Congress in the winter and summer of 1882. The elections that fall indicated the probability of a Democratic assumption of power at Washington two years thence. The *Plain Dealer* insisted it favored the principle of the merit system, but it opposed the Pendleton bill which passed the Senate in December. It declared that the Republicans, foreseeing a Democratic administration, were scheming to keep their partisans in office.³⁹ Years later the *Plain Dealer* would be known widely as an ardent advocate of civil service for the nation, state, and local subdivisions.

To give the women of America equality at the ballot box would, in the opinion of the *Plain Dealer* of 1869, transform

³⁴ February 10, 1869.

³⁵ July 25.

³⁶ November 15.

³⁷ February 6, 1869.

³⁸ December 8, 1870.

³⁹ December 24, 1882.

them into "political swaggerees, with a love of wine, whiskey and lager beer." ⁴⁰ On this point, as on many others, Armstrong reflected the prejudices of a generation which never dreamed that the women of America would, not long after the beginning of the next century, assume a full partnership in the conduct of their country's democratic institutions. Here, again, the later *Plain Dealer* would conspicuously reverse the position of the earlier one.

Armstrong, however, was maintaining a tradition set by J. W. Gray many years before. In 1851 had appeared the following serio-comic editorial on a topic then interesting many women in Cleveland and elsewhere:

A PEEP INTO THE FUTURE

Imagine a Whig husband and a Democratic wife, a free soil uncle and hunker aunt, a liberty party cousin, a colonization nephew, a slave-holding niece and three blooming daughters who have gone over bodice and bustle to the terrified democracy and for the first time in their lives will vote in pink muslin at the next election! Imagine this group gathered around the same table, tea and muffins, graced by Mr. Garrison and Abby looking in at the window! How long would a well-built house probably stand, thus divided against itself? ⁴¹

Thus Armstrong and his occasional partners and associates went on their way, meeting the issues of public policy as they arose from month to month. They were often wrong and often right. Their percentage of error was probably no higher than the average among competitors in a highly competitive industry at a highly competitive period in newspaper-making.

⁴⁰ Quoted by the *Leader*, February 22.

⁴¹ February 11.

CHAPTER VI

“OF CABBAGES AND KINGS”

*Editors discuss a variety of things. A community sees
a reflection of its own thinking in the local
columns of its daily paper.*

THE COLUMNS of a newspaper perform, among their other functions, that of a mirror in which the people of a community see a reflection of their own thinking from year to year. On news and advertising pages, in particular, appears a reasonably accurate, if unwitting, record of the habits and conceits of those to whom the paper must appeal for support.

Editorial columns show the trend of serious thought. The rest of the paper tells a story often more significant from the standpoint of community development.

In the hundred years covering the life of the *Plain Dealer* a social, economic, and political revolution has occurred in America. Its battle-front has extended to every city, town, and village. Its progress has been recorded, among other means, through the agency of innumerable small paragraphs of what once went under the title of “local intelligence.”

Items which appear quite insignificant on publication may assume a measure of importance to the student in after years.

Conservationists will never cease mourning the inexcusable slaughter of the now extinct passenger pigeon, a species which, at the birth of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, was so plentiful in Ohio that they were peddled from wagons for food at a fraction

of a cent apiece. Any Clevelander who owned or was able to borrow a shotgun could, at the periods of the pigeons' flight, merely point the weapon skyward and without taking aim bring innumerable birds to earth.

"The roar of the many million wings," said the *Herald and Gazette*, "sounded at the distance of miles like the heavy surges of Erie beating an iron-bound coast."¹

Questions of wages and hours and the conduct of employers began early to find voices in the press. "Susan," a housemaid, writes the *Herald* to protest that, whereas men labored for \$1.25 or even \$1.75 a day, she and her kind were compelled to work longer hours for from 75 cents to \$1.50 a week. The editor agrees that the situation is unjust, and foresees a time "when the fine lady with all her wealth and fine things will not be able to sit quietly at her ease and have her drudgery done for less than the cost of her perfumery."²

Four years later newspaper printers went on strike. The proprietors of the Cleveland papers stood together in resistance to demands for higher wages. According to a card printed in all the papers, the printers were then working ten hours a day for from \$8 to \$12 a week on the evening papers; men on the morning papers sometimes received as much as \$15 a week.³

Moderate pay was not, however, reserved for those who worked with their hands. High-school principals in 1858 drew salaries of \$1,100 a year. The *Plain Dealer* said: "If, as we suspect, female teachers get less than ordinary domestics, it is about time a system so palpably unfair was effectually and forever knocked in the head."⁴

The *Plain Dealer* was fearful in 1851 that the city's experiences touching real-estate values in the depression of a few years earlier would be repeated in sorrow:

¹ June 15, 1842.

² April 19, 1848.

³ *Plain Dealer*, September 4, 1852.

⁴ July 15.

Lands one mile east from the court house and even to the city limits are now selling at \$16 per foot, ordinary depths from main streets. On Superior street west of the square \$300 per foot is freely paid. Lots on Water street range from \$100 to \$200 per foot its entire length; Bank street from \$50 to \$100. Water front lots on River street vary from \$75 to \$250 per foot as you approach the mouth of the river. Lands on the canal for the first half mile from its outlet sell and rent high. At present prices, say an average of \$50 per foot, the whole city of Cleveland, as now extended, would require the entire gold receipts from California for a year at least to purchase the plat.⁵

A score of years later the paper cautioned the community against "high-priced real estate." Unless "present tendencies cease, the day will come sooner than many expect when somebody will 'hold the bag.'"⁶

The day of the newspaper expert on styles for women was still well in the future, but comment on such delicate matters was not withheld. The *Plain Dealer* was more than tolerant of the bloomer costume, but the "tilting hoop skirt" met its outspoken denunciation. A "bloomer ball" at Akron was described as a "goodly sight."⁷

But the "tilting hoop" was nothing less than a menace to the community. For instance: "The sight of a lady going up Superior street yesterday in a high state of 'tilting' excitement set us to wondering whether female modesty wasn't a mere sham after all. And we likewise wondered whether there was anything under the sun — no matter how immodest — that the fair sex would shrink from doing, if it was only fashionable."⁸

The question of style, however, was not always one of feminine morals. During 1885 the *Plain Dealer* printed a daily column on the editorial page written by one who signed himself "The Lounger." He was the about-town reporter who wrote

⁵ May 29, 1851.

⁶ July 7, 1873.

⁷ June 7, 1851.

⁸ March 23, 1866. An advertisement in the *Leader* (March 8, 1865) sang the praises of a "new and great invention in hoop skirts — the duplex elliptical steel spring."

his impressions and observations of the everyday life of the city.

He takes a peek into one of the Euclid Avenue stores and offers this comment:

New styles of silk hose for women are gaudy and handsome. They are all in bright stripes or bars to suit the make-up of the limbs they are to cover. Stripes broad at the top and tapering as they descend shape up a heavy limb, while bars make a slender one appear less slender. But the prices are astonishing, a good pair of such hose costing \$7, and a superior pair \$15. . . .⁹

With or without the protection of striped or barred hose, ladies' limbs needed some defense against the chills of winter, and in 1888 the *Plain Dealer* urged that street cars be heated. The management of the local lines pointed out that they had once tried to heat the cars but found no practical stove on the market suitable to the purpose. When the experiment was tried the stove heated the straw on the floor to the point that it smelled offensively. According to the managers, passengers preferred the cold to the smell.¹⁰

But what would the life of an early editor be like if he could not worry about community morals? The *Herald* complained that the newly popular plank roads were doing Cleveland a disservice by bringing into the city many undesirable characters who frequented saloons and other resorts and gave the community a bad name.¹¹

A reminder of journalism's mendicant days is found in the *Cleveland Review's* protest against the railroads' reported intention to abolish free passes. The paper could not see why the roads should object to giving editors free transportation, being sure they earned all they got.¹²

Street perils in Civil War days were not caused by reckless motorists or the crashing of traffic lights, but they seemed none

⁹ September 3, 1885.

¹⁰ January 1.

¹¹ February 15, 1851.

¹² December 21, 1859.

the less real to pedestrians. The *Plain Dealer* protested against the frequency of runaways downtown, and suggested arrest for owners who left their horses in the streets unhitched.¹³

Fast and furious driving antedated the motor car by thirty years at least. Said the *Plain Dealer* in protest:

Things in this city appear to have come to such a pass that pedestrians have no rights which Jehus are bound to respect. Scarcely a day passes but we hear of some one being run over by a furious driver, and an arm or a leg broken. Crossing the street is one of the prominent dangers that city flesh is heir to, and timid ladies and nervous gentlemen watch at crossings for a chance to cross when no teams are in sight.¹⁴

Neither fast driving, however, nor the *Herald's* fear for the city's morals blinded the editor to the need of more improved streets. "Buffalo has 52 miles of paved streets," the *Plain Dealer* pointed out, while "we have about one mile of paved and planked streets and no more."¹⁵ Cleveland's nearest source of good paving stone was Buffalo and at fourteen dollars a cord it was pretty expensive.

Anyway, not everyone wanted the streets paved. As late as 1886 a letter-writer to the *Plain Dealer* pleaded with the authorities not to pave Payne Avenue. Some dirt roads were needed, he said, where one might drive without "shaking our bones over the stones."¹⁶

Something of the political feeling of the community near the beginning of the Civil War is indicated by the advertisement of one G. W. Crowell that he was ready to make "all kinds of flags except secession ones."¹⁷

About this same time the high cost of living broke into the local newspaper columns as a topic of popular concern. "The costliest item of table expense now is milk," the *Plain Dealer* points out. "The best butter can be got in the country from 8 to

¹³ July 16, 1863.

¹⁶ August 3, 1886.

¹⁴ August 7, 1865.

¹⁷ *Plain Dealer*, May 10, 1861.

¹⁵ July 17, 1857.

10 cents per pound, yet we have to pay 5 cents a quart for milk.”¹⁸ This seems to the editor “disproportioned,” and he suggests that Cleveland needs a milk depot.

Though the refining of crude oil was already becoming a business vastly important to Cleveland, there was still a good deal of mystery surrounding its production. “These oil wells,” the editor confessed, “are a phenomena as yet but little understood. . . . These wells make the most ludicrous noises at times, alternately blubbering air or bubbling water, with sounds resembling a fat man in a fit of nightmare.”¹⁹

The sport menu three quarters of a century ago had limitations, but included some items not popularly sanctioned today. In an advertisement one T. F. Andrews, 104 Seneca Street, announced a forthcoming “handicap rat match at the pit,” which would be open to all dogs under twenty-five pounds in weight. “Mr. Andrews has a large lot of fine rats for the occasion.”²⁰

Another sport, however, was far more popular and continued longer in vogue. The *Leader* called cock fighting next to billiards in popular interest.²¹ A dozen years later fifty Clevelanders attended a cock fight between Cleveland and Troy birds in the ballroom of the Rockport House and saw the local warriors win.²² This sport, which Andrew Jackson was said to love, lived on for years after his death.

When J. Wilkes Booth played in Cleveland toward the end of the Civil War the local critics unitedly praised his acting. It was the *Plain Dealer's* opinion that, “let him but wisely use the gifts within his grasp — cultivate and develop them — and a brilliant future must crown him with an enduring halo.”²³ Alas for editorial prophecy! In eighteen months Booth committed the most shocking crime in American history.

¹⁸ October 4, 1861.

¹⁹ *Plain Dealer*, November 27, 1861.

²⁰ *Plain Dealer*, July 13, 1861.

²¹ March 21, 1862.

²² *Plain Dealer*, January 5, 1875.

²³ October 5, 1863.

Present-day readers inclined to condemn publishers for sensationalism in news-handling may turn back to a particular issue of the *Plain Dealer* not long after the war for purposes of comparison. Of a total news space of about twelve columns on this occasion, seven and a half were given to the execution of one John W. Hughes in Cleveland, the story of his crime, incidents of his life in prison, and examples of his literary labors while awaiting the gallows.²⁴ Modern yellow journalism could scarcely have done more, better or worse.

Pedestrian safety, formerly jeopardized by runaway horses and heartless Jehus, was later threatened by the popularity of velocipedes. It was considered noteworthy in 1869 that one A. N. Piper had ridden his velocipede all the way to East Cleveland and back, the return trip being made without once dismounting.²⁵ East Cleveland then extended as near the Public Square as the street now called East 55th.

The editor calls attention to an article in a scientific publication describing a newly invented two-seated velocipede, on which the lady rode behind on a side-saddle, kicking a single pedal to assist the locomotion.²⁶

Popular interest in science ranged from transportation to illumination. The *Plain Dealer* loses patience over the repeated promises of Thomas A. Edison, who is always about to invent some new kind of light, but never does so: “Edison is not panning out as extensively as was promised. . . . It requires no particular sagacity to see that if he does not ‘develop’ something definite soon he will cease to scare folks.”²⁷ A contrast is drawn between Edison and Cleveland’s own inventor, Charles F. Brush: “Edison is always talking about doing; Brush is always doing without talking.”²⁸

The high state of Cleveland morality, as well as what the editors of an earlier generation considered important news, were

²⁴ February 9, 1866.

²⁵ May 10.

²⁶ *Plain Dealer*, April 21, 1869.

²⁷ March 1, 1879.

²⁸ March 8, 1882.

reflected in the arrest of three *Herald* reporters for "forcibly taking away" from a *Leader* man the manuscript of an address delivered before a local teachers' convention. The offenders were tried for the robbery, but the case was settled out of court.²⁹

The conditions of newspaper-making in Cleveland, particularly those of the publication of a paper which habitually spoke for the minority, were comparatively simple. One of the *Plain Dealer* editors visits Buffalo and is deeply impressed by the journalistic opulence he observes. He calls on Colonel E. H. Butler, editor and proprietor of the *Evening News*, and on his return to Cleveland bursts out:

Just think of an editor with a telephone ready at hand, with electric bells and speaking tubes at his desk, connecting every department of a flourishing business and then, not as romance do we write, coming to his office in a coupe and wearing a sealskin coat. No such style as that prevails in the Forest City.³⁰

Editorial comprehension was limited by narrow horizons, as was that of the reading public. No one, it is safe to say, foresaw forty years ago the advent of economic mass production or the urban traffic headache of the coming motor age. At least no comprehension of either was indicated in this paragraph:

For all except people with generous incomes the cost of a horseless carriage is really prohibitive. As long as an auto costs as much as a team of horses with the carriage attached it cannot be expected that the craze will grow with any marked degree in rapidity.³¹

Shades of Henry and Edsel Ford! No calling is more hazardous than that of prophecy reduced to print.

Ever guardful of the welfare of his community is the editor who mans the moral ramparts. Early in the century a bill was before the Ohio Legislature to legalize Sunday baseball. With or without the legislation, there was a move on foot to play a Sunday game in Cleveland and see what happened. Sheriff

²⁹ *Plain Dealer*, July 9, 1879.

³⁰ March 6, 1886.

³¹ *Plain Dealer*, July 1, 1901.

Edwin D. Barry said the game would not be allowed. The *Plain Dealer*:

Sunday baseball is the entering wedge of an “open Sunday.” Its legalization is planned to be followed or accompanied by the legalization of Sunday poolrooms, and then barrier after barrier would be swept away and, instead of the orderly Cleveland Sunday with its restful peace, there would soon be the “wide-open” Sunday of Chicago and St. Louis.³²

The comment sounds now a bit stilted and archaic, so great has been the change in urban Sunday thought and observance in the intervening years. It is hardly to be questioned, however, that the opinion expressed was prevalent in Cleveland at that period.

It was some years after this before Sunday baseball became legal in Ohio. Cleveland survived the invasion without any serious loss of civic character. The *Plain Dealer* became as enthusiastic for Sunday games as it had been reluctant to see them legalized.

³² March 11, 1902.

CHAPTER VII

THE PLAIN DEALER PUBLISHING COMPANY

The proprietor organizes a stock company, but retains control. The daily Globe. A morning edition is established, but soon disappears.

UNDER the personal ownership of Armstrong, broken only by the brief partnerships of Morgan and Green, the *Plain Dealer* came through the Reconstruction period alive and reasonably prosperous if not quite unscathed. It had twice moved to more commodious and convenient quarters, acquiring new presses and other equipment needed to meet the demands of an expanding business.

Newspaper circulation reports sixty or seventy years ago were notoriously unreliable, whether used by a publisher concerning his own business or that of a competitor. The day of accurately attested figures, now readily obtainable anywhere, was still well in the future. Advertising revenue likewise was in large measure a matter of claim and challenge.

Near the beginning of 1875 the *Leader* declared it had a circulation of 13,000 and that the *Plain Dealer* had but 1,680.¹ In court, however, the editor of the *Plain Dealer* swore his circulation was 2,400.² A few months later the *Leader* boasted its own circulation was nearly six times that of the *Plain Dealer* and double that of the *Herald*.³

¹ February 1.

² *Leader*, August 8, 1875.

³ March 23, 1876.

As for advertising income, figures from the internal revenue office showed that for the nine months ending with April 1866 the *Leader* received \$21,933 the *Herald* \$12,886, and the *Plain Dealer* \$8,686.⁴ The *Plain Dealer* did not challenge this report, but pointed out that both the other papers had morning and evening editions, while it had but one. Armstrong then added: "We desire to say that the *Plain Dealer* does not owe a penny it cannot pay on demand, and that it is established on a firm and lasting foundation and in due time it is our hope that it will be profitable to its proprietors."⁵

The comparison of figures was obviously unfair since at the beginning of this nine-month period the *Plain Dealer* had been less than four months out of the limbo into which Stephenson had plunged it. And there was plenty of evidence that, bad as the situation had been, it was now fast improving from the business-office point of view.

After the Tilden campaign, which had cost the *Plain Dealer* more than its proprietor could properly afford, it again became evident to Armstrong that more money was needed for operating the concern than he could himself provide. The partnership arrangement, first with Morgan and later with Green, had brought some relief, but by 1874 Armstrong was again sole owner and any new financing found necessary must be done by him.

As early as January 1867 the *Cleveland Leader* Company had been incorporated with an authorized capital of \$300,000. Edwin Cowles then ceased to become sole proprietor, as Armstrong now was of the *Plain Dealer*, and took a controlling share in the new concern. The *Leader* had prospered greatly under the new arrangement, whether or not the fact of incorporation had anything to do with it.

The example was contagious. In January 1877, following the *Leader* procedure of ten years before, Armstrong and six other

⁴ *Leader*, April 23, 1866.

⁵ Quoted by the *Leader*, May 1, 1866.

Cleveland men sought incorporation of the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company, whose business would be "the printing and publishing [of] a daily, tri-weekly and weekly newspaper, carrying on the business of job printing, printing and publishing books, pamphlets and other documents." The capital proposed was \$75,000 in hundred-dollar shares.⁶

Pursuant to this action, the articles of incorporation were recorded in the office of the secretary of state on February 13, 1877. Under the charter thus granted, the *Plain Dealer* has been published for sixty-five years.

The incorporators were W. W. Armstrong, George Hoyt, David P. Foster, George Judson, A. P. Winslow, Charles Gordon, and O. H. Payne. Armstrong and Hoyt had been newspaper associates from the beginning, Foster was in the wholesale liquor business, Winslow had recently retired as sheriff of the county, Gordon was general manager of the Cleveland Non Explosive Lamp Company, Payne was treasurer of the Standard Oil Company and a son of Henry B. Payne. Thomas R. Whitehead, W. J. Gleason, J. J. Smith, John C. Roland, and John G. Gross were also original subscribers to the stock. Smith was president of the Co-Operative Printing Company, a next-door neighbor of the *Plain Dealer*, with which Whitehead, Thomas A. Stow, and Gleason had been associated. Roland was an advertising solicitor on the *Plain Dealer* staff.

Armstrong took 559 shares, assuring him control of the new company, and Hoyt was the second heaviest subscriber with 50. Armstrong became president, Hoyt vice president, and Roland secretary. In return for property which Armstrong transferred to the corporation he was given these 559 shares of stock and "the further additional sum" of \$19,100. Stock not taken up by subscribers would be applied as part payment on the "additional sum." It was ordered that Armstrong's salary as

⁶ The *Herald* followed the example of its competitors, filing its own articles of incorporation on December 14, 1877. Its capital was fixed at \$200,000.

president should be \$2,100 and Hoyt's as vice president \$1,500. At the beginning of the next year Byron Pope, who had been a deputy sheriff under Winslow, was chosen secretary at \$1,200 a year. He became manager of the counting-room in 1877 and remained with the paper until 1882, when he resigned to become again a deputy, this time under Sheriff Edwin Sawyer.

Near the end of 1881 the capital stock was increased to \$100,000. The entire amount was then held by Armstrong, Hoyt, Pope, Roland, Gleason, and Smith.

That matters other than business and revenue sometimes occupied the time of the board of directors is indicated by a resolution adopted in 1879 asking Hoyt "to officially notify all the editors that they must be at their desks daily at 8:30 o'clock a.m. unless for good and sufficient reason excused, and not leave the office until after the paper has gone to press for the second edition, excepting only wherein discharging their several duties it is necessary for them to go out."⁷

In 1874 the *Plain Dealer* was sued for libel by Jerome F. Young, who had recently come to Cleveland and opened a dry-goods store. The store was burglarized and the circumstances appeared to City Editor Cobleigh as suspicious. He wrote a story about it which the proprietor of the store did not like. "If one is damaged so seriously by undesired publicity," remarked the *Plain Dealer*, "advertisers ought to see the value of helpful publicity."

The only fact of the situation that seems now worth remembering is that when the jury brought in a verdict of \$2,500⁸ against the paper, the *Herald*, *Leader*, *Express*, *Sunday Voice*, and *Saturday Pictorial World* united in a chorus of protest that the verdict was unfair. Such unanimity of opinion touching the welfare of a newspaper competitor was rare enough to be historic. Later the award was reduced by \$1,000.

The idea of bringing the *Plain Dealer* into the morning field

⁷ April 23.

⁸ April 23, 1875.

arose almost as soon as the evening daily was seen to be a success. In the spring of 1852 appeared this editorial:

THE MORNING DAILY PLAIN DEALER

We issue our first number of the new paper this morning. . . . It is our intention to publish a *morning paper*, one that shall contain all the news *up to the hour of going to press* and not, as is too often the case, call that a "morning paper" which only *circulates* in the morning but is in fact *printed* in the evening or some ten hours before its date. . . .

The concentration of so many railroads and steamboat lines at this place renders a morning edition of this paper necessary in order to give our readers all the news and at the earliest practical period. Mail boats and cars carrying the mails are arranged to arrive in the evening after the daily goes to press and leave next morning before said daily is printed, thus making our *mail* matter one day old before delivery to city subscribers and thus two or three days old before delivery to country subscribers.⁹

This morning edition was not intended to interfere with the evening *Plain Dealer*. It was designed only for mail subscribers and for delivery by carriers. Had this effort succeeded, the paper would have got into the morning field two years before the advent of the *Leader*. The *Forest City* and the *True Democrat* were already morning dailies. The *Herald* waited another ten years before adding a morning edition to its long-established evening one. But the morning *Plain Dealer* of 1852 lasted only a short time. The community was not ready for it. It believed two papers enough at that end of the day. Twenty years later, with Armstrong in control, the *Plain Dealer* again edged into the morning field, this time in competition with the *Herald* and the *Leader*. But this venture, too, was soon abandoned.

The Democratic candidate for Congress in the Cleveland district in 1872 was Selah Chamberlain, builder and capitalist. On the announcement of the new morning edition, the *Leader* at once suspected a relationship between the wealth of the nominee and the *Plain Dealer's* fresh enterprise:

⁹ May 10.

The first result of Democratic stratagem in nominating a wealthy man for Congress breaks out on the second page of yesterday's Plain Dealer. Having been stiffened up financially by a new alliance, the Plain Dealer proposes to print a morning edition, so that Ohio can have two Democratic morning papers to offset the twenty or more Republican dailies now printed in the state. If the Democracy can afford to risk the effects of another edition of the Plain Dealer, the Republicans have nothing to fear.¹⁰

The *Cincinnati Enquirer* was then the only Democratic morning paper in Ohio.

This morning edition of the *Plain Dealer*, like that of 1852, was designed merely to supplement the evening paper. A *Plain Dealer* proprietor again misjudged the situation. The first morning edition appeared on September 2. The demand for it "comes from many northern Ohio cities," the editor said. The demand apparently fell off, however, for on November 9, four days after the election, the morning issue was discontinued. The evening field was found to be best.

A more pretentious attempt to give Cleveland a morning *Plain Dealer* was made in 1880. This time the evening paper was abandoned. The enterprise was lifted bodily into the sunrise field. Its advent was announced with a full measure of rhetorical confidence, and with no concession to the art of paragraphing:

THE MORNING PLAIN DEALER

We shall begin day after tomorrow the regular issue of a morning Plain Dealer. We do not think the event calls for a flourish of trumpets, and shall crack nobody's ears over it; but the change in our office economy is so radical that it at least calls for some special remarks. The Plain Dealer has from the date of its original issue been an evening paper; and we venture to suggest that the thirty eight years of its existence do not indicate that it has entirely failed in that sphere. But the evening paper cannot be in the best sense a *news*-paper. In earlier days it could do better in this respect. That was before the electric telegraph was perfected, and before the commercial and news correspondence of two worlds was flashed under the ocean.

¹⁰ August 28, 1872.

When the stage coach and the Pony Express were the models of travel and news transmission, it made little difference at what hour a journal was issued; and even after the advent of large improvements over these the evening press held its own very well. The rush of invention and improvement, however, has for some years been making the afternoon paper more and more antiquated until it is now far from abreast of the times, and can only prosper under exceptionally favorable circumstances. It is for this reason that we have decided to change our time of issue from evening to morning. Recognizing the wonderful growth of the daily paper and its constantly expanding field we desire that the Plain Dealer shall have as full play for its faculties as its contemporaries. We do not mean by this that we shall give its readers a duplicate of the giant dailies; but that we shall give them the news, domestic and foreign, from every point of the compass, and that digestion and judicious compression shall make it attractive and readable. In this way the Plain Dealer will hope to make up what it may lack in mere bulk.¹¹ Experience shows that a peculiar demand exists for papers of this class. We say peculiar demand, because it emanates from that large class of the community that has no time to give to the colossal dailies whose triple, quadruple and quintuple sheets make the ordinary reader stand aghast unless he be a man of limitless leisure. In these rushing days a numerous class has no time to devote to such vast magazines of information; and it turns gratefully to a paper which gives the spirit of it within a smaller compass. The province of the morning Plain Dealer will be the supplying of this demand. And, besides, we shall print a clean paper. Some men in our day claim to possess the journalistic genius in a high degree because they readily float new journals. The distinguishing feature of such ventures, in nine cases out of ten, is found to be in nastiness. Now it takes no genius or brains or capital to make a blackmailing, slanderous journal pay — for a time at least. The vile traffic that the societies for the suppression of vice are trying to break up thrives as do few decent callings. There is a calling peculiar to cities the world over — we need not name it — which always “pays.” It is possible to reduce “journalism” to the level of that calling, which is as profitable in one form as the other — the one title covering both species of the traffic. From such a rock in the newspaper stream we shall earnestly endeavor to steer; and as the Plain Dealer

¹¹ The morning *Plain Dealer* had four pages of eight columns; the *Herald* had eight pages of seven columns.

has kept its bark in clear water for thirty eight years its managers have no fears that they cannot continue it in that channel. They hope to make it especially attractive as a local paper, and as a purveyor of northern Ohio news.¹²

Two months later the editor assured his readers that the morning experiment was proving satisfactory:

The morning Plain Dealer from the date of its first issue has been a success; and although we are unable at present to print as large a paper as the Cleveland Herald or Cincinnati Enquirer in the territory which is immediately tributary to Cleveland we are glad to say that our paper is cordially indorsed by the Democracy and handsomely sustained by the public. . . .¹³

But the enthusiasm of May dwindled rapidly as the time of the national election approached. It petered out completely after Garfield had beaten Hancock for president. What might have happened had the Democrat won can only be conjectured. The times being what they were in politics, it is possible that the prestige of success might have anchored the *Plain Dealer* permanently in the morning field.

Following the presidential election came this editorial announcement:

BACK TO EVENING JOURNALISM

Now that the campaign is over the Plain Dealer proposes, on Monday next, to return to the exclusive field of evening journalism. When we began our morning issue, in the spring, we did not contemplate a permanent thing. We feel that the evening field is peculiarly our own. The Plain Dealer was started as an afternoon paper, and had always been known as such till the "new departure." The morning edition has met with a fair measure of success; but we are convinced that the old friends and patrons of the Plain Dealer prefer that it be published after the original plan. A preference for the evening journal is evidently growing in the country at large. With the perfection of the means of telegraphic communication the morning press loses much of its advantage as a purveyor of news; and as

¹² March 13.

¹³ May 25, 1880.

that is the only advantage it has over its rivals, the latter naturally rises in the public estimation. There are many reasons why it should be preferred. Only people of more or less leisure can do the morning journal justice. The business man can only skim its contents in the hurried moments before breakfast. He hardly looks at anything but the telegraphic headlines and the markets. The only time he has for reading the paper in any rational sense is after tea, in the evening, when he can sit down in dressing gown and slippers and have three or four hours of delightful ease. It is then that he may enjoy and profit by the afternoon paper. And why may not the latter supply all his needs in the matter of news? The agents of the Associated Press have most of the hours of daylight for the collection of their budget; and they have so improved in their serving of the evening press that very little difference, as we said before, now exists between the two issues as to the completeness and volume of their gathering. Then there is the large and important body of working men and artisans; these members of society are the heartiest and most omniverous readers of the daily paper; but they have no time for the morning journal. If they read it at all they read it after its news is twelve hours old. To the evening journal they can give several hours time; and the evening journal is the one they must have. To this class the Plain Dealer, as its old self, will largely appeal. Although much better able to serve its readers with telegraphic information than formerly, the afternoon paper is pre-eminently a local paper, or should be; and it is our intention to make the Plain Dealer all that is required in this regard. In fact there is no class of society uninterested in a well-conducted, live, evening paper. The morning paper plays an important role in our social economy, but its mission is soon ended. Its relationship to the reading public is of an ephemeral nature, while that of the evening press is close and enduring. Compare the respective advantages of the two issues and it will be found that the evening paper leads. The requests for the return of the Plain Dealer to evening journalism have been numerous and earnest, and we are convinced that the resumption of our original ways will be hailed with satisfaction by the bulk of our present readers. We shall aim to enhance the traits which have given the Plain Dealer its individuality. . . . It has been truly said of the evening papers that none others have such intelligent readers. This is self-evidently true. The morning papers are the railroad eating houses of the literary world, so to speak; the evening papers are the snug hostelries where the sojourner makes himself at home and digests what he eats. We sus-

pect that as a rule, where an old established afternoon paper has changed into a morning issue it has sooner or later changed back again, agreeably to the wishes of its patrons, which are not slow of expression. We look with satisfaction upon the Plain Dealer's return to its old and well-trodden field, because we believe that the return is in response to a general wish of our subscribers. . . .¹⁴

These contrasting statements — the one in March and the other in November — may be interesting chiefly as an illustration of how easily Armstrong persuaded himself of what he wanted to believe. In March the whole trend of popular thought and popular reading habits argued the advantages of the morning over the evening newspaper. After the sharp disappointment of the November election Armstrong was convinced that, in spite of what he had said six months earlier, the evening paper really occupied the preferred position in the community. And so in the evening field exclusively the *Plain Dealer* was to remain for another four years and a half.

For weeks preceding the October state elections the *Plain Dealer* carried under the masthead an offer to bet five thousand dollars on the election of Hancock. There were no takers. After the October ballots had shown a definite trend toward Garfield, the wager was withdrawn; not, it was announced, because the party making the offer doubted Hancock's selection, but "for other reasons"!

The venture into the morning field cost the paper, chiefly Armstrong, a good many thousand dollars. By mid-October this loss must have been foreseen, and there was no wish to add to it a lost wager on Hancock. The fact is that after the October elections very few people believed that the Democrat could win the presidency.

At the outset of the morning *Plain Dealer*, the *Leader* printed a dispatch from Columbus saying that Samuel J. Tilden was "claimed" to have bought the paper. This, answered Armstrong, was a "cool, premeditated and deliberate lie."

¹⁴ November 6, 1880.

Two years before this the community saw the birth of the *Penny Press* which, changing its name to the *Cleveland Press* after a few years, was to become one of the outstanding journalistic successes of the time.¹⁵ The *Press*, a seven-column, four-page paper, was founded by Edward W. Scripps and John S. Sweeney, cousins, and was destined to be the pre-eminent member of a newspaper league extending into many states.

All three of the established papers in Cleveland greeted the newcomer with scorn. It sold for half the price they did. It seemed to violate all the established rules of newspaper-making. But it lived to see two of its detractors in their graves and the third an appreciative, co-operative neighbor.

The spring of 1881 saw the *Plain Dealer* belatedly abandon the folio for the quarto form. It was the last of the Cleveland papers printed in English to make the change. The folio, it was explained, meant a paper of four pages and eight long columns, while the quarto called for eight pages, usually with columns much shorter, and fewer in number. Colloquially, the folio was a "bed-sheet," awkward to handle where elbow room was restricted.

The announcement:

THE QUARTO PLAIN DEALER

The Plain Dealer has waited a good while before donning the quarto style of dress in which it appears today. It is nearly forty years old, and during that long period has retained the folio size. Opinions have differed as to the respective merits of the two methods of make-up. The folio, the old-fashioned, has many friends and many old and good papers are its exponents. . . . We are fortified by the weight of press opinion. A large number of the more important papers are now issued as quartos. . . . The Plain Dealer has as good a right to wear smart garments as any of its contemporaries; and it purposes not only to wear them but to be worthy of them.¹⁶

¹⁵ The first issue appeared on November 2, 1878. The *Penny Press* became the *Press* on November 10, 1884. The *Press* became the *Cleveland Press* on Sept 21, 1889.

¹⁶ May 9, 1881.

This same year witnessed the launching and the speedy wrecking of the third serious attempt by Western Reserve Democrats to destroy the *Plain Dealer*.

The first grew out of J. W. Gray's fight with Postmaster Spencer and Postmaster General Johnson in the fall of 1845. The *Times*, then started, lasted till the winter of 1849.

The second was a result of Gray's refusal to go with President Buchanan on the Lecompton issue. The *National Democrat* lasted two years, beginning in January 1859.

Now came the third attempt, when Democrats dissatisfied with the *Plain Dealer* launched the *Cleveland Globe*, a morning paper. The *Globe* lasted only one month, but into these thirty days were crowded enough turmoil and recrimination to keep the gossips busy for a long time.

The Palms of Warren, Ohio, Jefferson and his son S. B., were the moving spirits in the *Globe's* establishment. Echo M. Heisley, Cleveland lawyer, was identified with it. Arnold Green was vice president of the publishing corporation. George H. Pendleton of Cincinnati, United States Senator and no friend of Armstrong, was a contributor to the enterprise. Charles B. Flood, who had edited the *National Democrat* and since been Columbus correspondent of the *Plain Dealer*, returned to edit the *Globe*.

Brief as the career of the new paper was, the enterprise dissolved in litigation. The younger Palm, it was claimed, refused to turn over to Heisley, as treasurer, a hundred-dollar contribution from Pendleton. The directors removed both Palms from their offices in the company. Green was arrested for extortion, but acquitted. The younger Palm locked up the books, and Heisley and Green filed a replevin to secure them.

So the courts saw the last of the *Globe*. It had made not even a dent in the *Plain Dealer's* armor of defense.

In the midst of the publicity connected with the advent of the *Globe* the *Plain Dealer* declared that "if the projectors want a Democratic daily in Cleveland, let them buy the Plain Dealer,

here offered for \$100,000. Present proprietors are willing to sell out on fair terms in order that they may close up business and go to Europe.”¹⁷

The *Toledo Democrat* furnished the text for the epitaph:

The Cleveland Daily Globe, the organ of the small crowd of political disturbers, established with the avowed intention of breaking down the old solid reliable Democratic representative paper, the Plain Dealer, has gone where it deserved to go. It had a sickly existence of thirty days. It didn't hurt the Plain Dealer, but it no doubt hurt the finances of those who embarked in the foolish undertaking.¹⁸

Whatever real desire Armstrong and his associates had to close up business and go to Europe was not then to be fulfilled. The end of the Armstrong regime was still more than three years in the future. It came at last without blare of trumpets.

¹⁷ July 11, 1881.

¹⁸ Quoted by the *Plain Dealer*, November 4, 1881.



P A R T I I I

The Holden Regime (1885-)

CHAPTER I

THE *PLAIN DEALER* FINDS NEW OWNERS, THEN SWALLOWS A RIVAL

*The Armstrong group gives way to the Holdens. The assets
of the city's oldest newspaper are later divided
with the Leader. Morning, Sunday,
and evening editions.*

IN an important sense, life for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* began, not at forty, but at forty-three!

The year 1885 marked an important epoch in the story of the newspaper which J. W. Gray founded and nurtured for a score of years; which W. W. Armstrong brought back to life at the end of the Civil War and kept going for another twenty years. New capital, new energy, and a new point of view touching a paper's obligations to the community and state thus fixed the character of the modern *Plain Dealer*.

In these hundred years the *Plain Dealer* has known but three ownerships. The estate of Gray continued in possession after his death, until the Armstrong purchase in 1865. Armstrong's ownership ended when the Holden group took possession at the beginning of 1885. Since L. E. Holden's death in 1913, his estate has continued to own and operate the enterprise.

Here is a record for which it would be difficult to find a parallel in the history of metropolitan newspaper-making in America. The situation is one conducive to stability of purpose. It contributes to the creation of traditions in service. It explains, in part, why the *Plain Dealer* has pursued a pretty even course

through the years, resistant to the wild winds of radicalism and equally unresponsive to the temptation to surrender to a fat, contented stodginess.

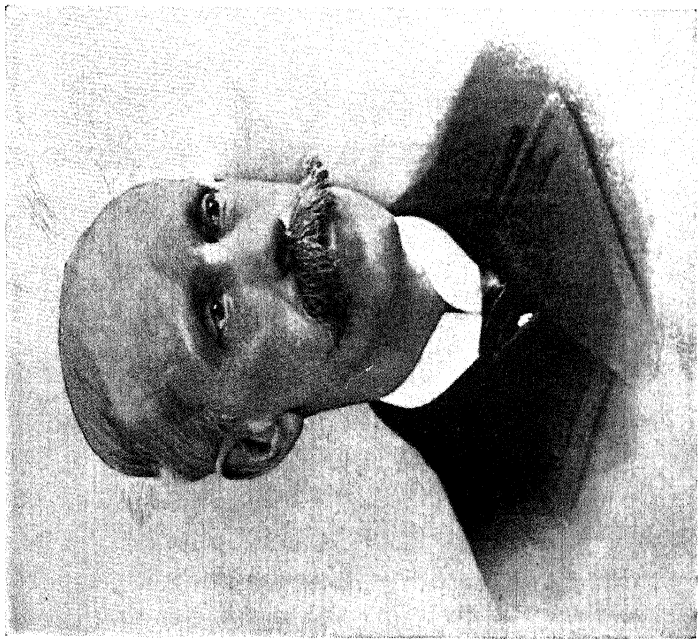
The year 1884 was one of great Democratic rejoicing. For the first time since the war a Democrat was conceded both a popular and an electoral plurality for the presidency. But, though the *Plain Dealer* was the recognized Democratic Party organ in northern Ohio, all was not well with Armstrong and his evening daily. The proprietor was deeply in debt. He had come to Cleveland in the spring of 1865 with a comfortable fortune, acquired chiefly from his newspaper enterprise at Tiffin. He had performed the wonder of resurrecting the *Plain Dealer* and worked faithfully to make it a success.

The paper was in 1884, admittedly, a success, but in making it such Armstrong had stretched his credit to the point of tenuity. He had doubtless spent some money foolishly, as when he established the morning edition in 1880 without assurance of adequate support, but his unswerving purpose was always to advance the interests of the paper. The business competition of the prosperous *Leader* and the less fortunate *Herald* was keen and their hostility relentless.

Added to these was the further consideration that Armstrong was unable to divorce journalism from partisan political activity, or to see that they should be divorced. He continued to make the paper a party organ when his readers were ready for a pabulum of different texture.

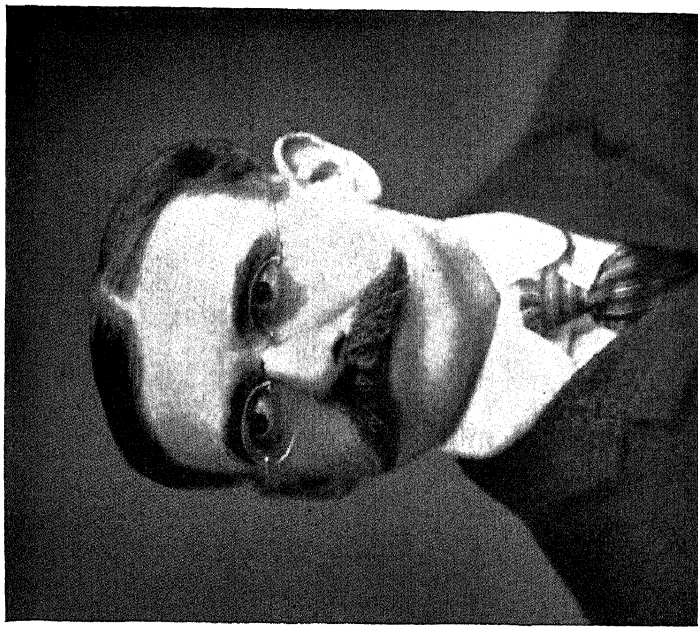
Toward the end of 1884 these factors were beginning to pinch. The *Plain Dealer* was not actually up for sale, though it was generally known that the property could be bought. Armstrong's financial embarrassment was no secret in the community.

Again the seat of Seneca County figures in the story of the *Plain Dealer*. William W. Armstrong was editor and proprietor of the *Seneca Advertiser* at Tiffin when Liberty E. Holden, fresh from the University of Michigan and Kalamazoo College, went



CHARLES H. BULKLEY

Mr. Bulkley, a brother of Mrs. L. E. Holden, directed the deal by which the Plain Dealer and Leader acquired the Herald.



CHARLES E. KENNEDY

Mr. Kennedy first came to the paper in 1885. He retired as co-lessee of the property in 1907.

Plain Dealer.

VOLUME 1

CLEVELAND, WEDNESDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 8, 1892.

NUMBER 207.



A PLAIN DEALER FIRST PAGE

Democrats were happy the day after election in 1892, and Editor Armstrong used his biggest rooster. Two dozen lesser roosters adorned other pages. "The blow has fallen," the editor declared. "The Republican party is in fragments."

to Tiffin in 1861 as superintendent of the public schools. The two men were within a few months of the same age; both were Democrats in politics and civic-spirited. Though their backgrounds were wholly different, they had much in common. They became friends.

The superintendent preceded the editor to Cleveland by three years, going there to complete his law studies. Armstrong, of course, went to start the suspended *Plain Dealer* on the next stage of its journey. In the years since they first met in Tiffin, L. E. Holden had acquired a fortune in real estate and mining. Armstrong had been less successful in a financial way.

Though Mr. Holden wished to buy and Mr. Armstrong wanted to sell the paper, their negotiations, carried on intermittently, covered more than a year. Both men were good bargainers. Finally on December 9, 1884 an agreement was reached, a formal contract was signed, and a check for three hundred dollars bound the bargain until the papers could be drawn.

The capital stock of the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company was \$100,000, divided into 1,000 shares of the par value of \$100 each.¹ Armstrong turned over to the new purchaser 817½ shares. All of the stock owned by J. J. Smith, John C. Roland, and W. J. Gleason went to the new owners, who included, besides L. E. Holden, his brother, Roman R. Holden, and his brother-in-law, Charles H. Bulkley. For the Armstrong shares surrendered Holden agreed to pay \$49,000; of which, however, \$30,000 went to two Cleveland banks to pay off notes held by them against Armstrong. Of the remaining \$19,000 due Armstrong, \$7,000 could at Holden's discretion be in part in the form of stock shares in the Cleveland Driving Park Company and in part in four sub-lots in the Bulkley & Holden allotment easterly of the city. If these options were exercised, Armstrong's cash return for giving up control of the *Plain Dealer* was \$12,000. He

¹ The original capital stock of the company was \$75,000. In 1881 it was increased to \$100,000, and in March 1887 was fixed at \$500,000.

was, however, given an eight-month contract to remain "one of the editors" of the paper, provided that he retain possession of at least fifty shares of stock.

This preliminary agreement of December 9 was made binding on the 15th. But not until the start of the new year was public announcement made of the new ownership. On January 2 the *Plain Dealer* printed this statement:

The majority of the shares of the PLAIN DEALER Publishing Co., held for many years by Mr. Armstrong, were sold and transferred yesterday to a number of gentlemen who, possessing the ability, experience and practical knowledge of the details of the business, propose to make the PLAIN DEALER one of the best newspapers of the country, and keep it as it has been in the past, one of the influential exponents of the principles of the Democratic party.

While no radical changes will be made for the present, and no extravagant promises given for the future, yet the new management feel assured that the improvement of the paper, editorially, typographically and in enterprise, will be a source of congratulation to its thousands of readers, as well as to the publishers.

It is the intention of the new management to begin the issue of a morning edition at an early date, in connection with the evening PLAIN DEALER.

The annual meeting of the stockholders of the PLAIN DEALER Publishing Co. was held yesterday, when the following directors were elected: L. E. Holden, C. H. Bulkley, G. F. Prescott, R. R. Holden and L. H. Prescott. At the directors' meeting subsequently the following officers were elected:

President, L. E. Holden
Vice president, C. H. Bulkley
Secretary, G. F. Prescott
Treasurer, R. R. Holden

George F.² and L. H. Prescott (father and son) had been newspaper men in Utah, connected recently with the *Salt Lake*

² George F. Prescott was born in Essex County, New York, in 1834. He owned or managed papers in his home state and in Leavenworth, Kansas, engaged in lumber at Oshkosh, Wisconsin, owned a job printing plant at St. Louis, interested himself in mining in Utah. He left the *Plain Dealer* at the beginning of 1893.

Tribune, and were brought to Cleveland to give the new owner personal representation among the active workers on the paper. The younger Prescott became telegraph editor. Roman R. Holden took the managing editor's desk, supplanting George Hoyt. Armstrong for the time retained the title of editor-in-chief. The experienced Nelson S. Cobleigh remained as city editor and Gilbert W. Henderson stayed on as chief editorial writer.

The *Leader* assured its readers that its old competitor would be "as stubbornly Democratic in politics as ever." Three weeks later the *Leader* gave its own version of the circumstances behind the sale:

Mr. Holden owns a big silver mine somewhere in the Rocky Mountains and is trying to discover a mode of getting rid of his silver, and has hit on the happy idea of going into the newspaper business and issuing a morning edition. The *Leader* wishes him joy.³

Much would be heard in the years ahead of the supposed connection between Mr. Holden's ownership of silver interests in the West and his ownership of a newspaper in Cleveland. It was for years part of the stock in trade of Holden's enemies in Cleveland. Another *Leader* opinion was that Mr. Holden intended to use the *Plain Dealer* to further a purpose on his part to become governor of Utah, which was then a territory.⁴

One of the articles of the Holden-Armstrong agreement of December 9 expressed the understanding that the *Plain Dealer* would have "the privilege under the Associated Press franchise to publish a morning edition as well as an evening edition by paying one-third of the expenses of said Associated Press reports charged to the Cleveland members of said association."

With this in mind, the *Plain Dealer* said at the beginning of February:

The PLAIN DEALER, as soon as it can perfect its arrangements in the way of procuring a faster press and better and more modern material, will commence the publication of a morning paper which

³ January 31.

⁴ February 15, 1885.

will include a Sunday edition. One of the officers of the Plain Dealer company is now in New York negotiating for a perfecting press.⁵

Both the *Leader* and the *Herald* were convinced by now that they would soon have new competition in the morning field, so long divided between them. The way the expected came about, however, made surprising newspaper history in Cleveland. The *Leader* was, indeed, to have new competition — a deadly competition which would in time prove its own complete undoing. The *Herald*, alas, would die on the day the morning *Plain Dealer* appeared.

The *Cleveland Herald* was by a wide margin of years the city's oldest newspaper. Started as a weekly in 1819, it became Cleveland's first daily when it entered the evening field in 1835, added a morning edition early in the Civil War, and joined the procession of Sunday papers late in the seventies. In politics Republican like the *Leader*, it was unlike the *Leader* in being then a victim of inefficient management.

Near the end of 1877 A. W. Fairbanks had sold the *Herald* to Richard C. Parsons, William Perry Fogg, and E. V. Smalley. Two weeks later the *Herald* Publishing Company was incorporated. Parsons, a former Congressman, was editor and chief owner. Smalley dropped out and Fogg wanted to sell.

Accordingly, Parsons persuaded a group of local moneyed men to put some fifty thousand dollars into the enterprise, buying out his remaining associate. In this group were J. H. Wade, founder of the Western Union; Henry Chisholm, head of the Cleveland Rolling Mills; John D. Rockefeller, H. M. Flagler, Amasa Stone, S. T. Everett, Dan P. Eels, Elias Sims, and Marcus A. Hanna. It would have been difficult to find here or in any other city a group of abler men or of men more successful in their own particular lines of activity. Several of them were millionaires.

They could not save the *Herald*, however. Parsons soon re-

⁵ February 7.

tired. The new management raided the editorial staff of the *Leader*, further embittering the long-standing feud between the two Republican papers. Edwin Cowles and his *Leader* continued to prosper in spite of the galaxy of capitalists lined up against them. For another five years the battle raged, the *Plain Dealer* being an interested but noncombatant observer. After Parsons left, Hanna as managing director carried on the losing fight pretty well alone. His wealthy associates became weary of it all. Each man of the group was intent on other interests. They cared little about the *Herald*, even if they did happen to own it. The situation was ripe for the kind of business deal which early in 1885 led to the disappearance of the *Herald* and a division of its assets between the *Plain Dealer* and the *Leader*.

To Charles H. Bulkley is given credit for bringing about the result.⁶ The *Leader* afterward declared that the "arrangements" were "made through a mutual representative, Mr. C. H. Bulkley." That Bulkley acted as an agent, or at least a confidant, of L. E. Holden is hardly to be doubted.

Carr V. Van Anda, telegraph editor of the *Herald* and later for years famed managing editor of the *New York Times*, wrote long after that Hanna was "skilfully maneuvered out of the Herald by L. E. Holden. . . . Hanna first learned on a journey home from New York that he was no longer in control of the Herald. He heard it from Holden who chanced to be a passenger on the same train, having just completed in New York the purchase of the last shares that gave him a majority."

The *Argus* — shortlived Cleveland daily, which disappeared the next year — said the sale of the *Herald* was on the basis of a valuation of \$100,000. According to this paper, Bulkley declared

⁶ Charles H. Bulkley was a son of Henry G. and Susan E. (Brown) Bulkley and a descendant in direct line of Peter Bulkley, first minister at Concord, Massachusetts, and donor of the first library to Harvard. He was born at Williamstown, Massachusetts, Sept. 26, 1842 and died in Cleveland December 29, 1895. His son, Robert J. Bulkley, served Ohio as a United States senator from 1931 to 1939.

he had not yet bought the Hanna stock in the *Herald*, but hoped to get it; already he owned the controlling interest.⁷

Before a joint meeting of directors and stockholders, called to hear the proposal from Bulkley, came the question of the *Plain Dealer's* purchase of "the plant, fixtures, etc." of the *Herald* and the transfer of the lease on the *Herald* Building "for \$45,000 on one year's time."⁸ The proposal was accepted and Bulkley given a one-year note for the amount at seven per cent interest. At the same meeting the secretary of the corporation was authorized to dispose of the old *Plain Dealer* plant and lease at Seneca and Frankfort Streets.

While the *Plain Dealer* was thus taking the physical assets of the *Herald*, together with its advertising contracts, the *Leader* bought its circulation, which, the *Leader* said, would be "consolidated" with its own. In the succeeding months the contest between the victors for the subscribers of the vanquished paper was spirited and never quite conclusive.⁹

The last issues of the *Herald*, morning and evening, appeared on Saturday, March 14. On Monday came the new morning *Plain Dealer*, published from the former *Herald* plant on Bank (now West 6th) Street.¹⁰ It used the *Herald* type and format. Except for the editorial opinions expressed and the identifying lines at the top of each page, the casual, uncritical reader might easily have believed it to be still the old familiar *Herald*.

⁷ March 12, 1885.

⁸ When the *Herald* first occupied this building at the beginning of 1851, it was hailed as a structure of rare convenience and beauty. "It is," said the *Herald*, "the first stone front business block erected in the city and from the universal admiration it excites we presume it will not be the last." The *Plain Dealer* moved out of the building to larger quarters in 1889.

⁹ The *Plain Dealer* said, June 22, 1885, that its circulation "ought to reach 30,000 before the beginning of the fall campaign." According to Charles E. Kennedy in his book *Fifty Years of Cleveland*, most of the *Herald* circulation "remained with the Plain Dealer."

¹⁰ "The Plain Dealer has issued its last number from the old building on Seneca street." — Editorial, March 18, 1885.

Determined to have a morning and a Sunday edition, the *Plain Dealer* had believed this to be the shortest way to its goal. The *Leader* on its part longed for the scalp of its old-time rival. It also wanted the *Evening Herald* with its Associated Press franchise, lest the up and coming *Cleveland Press* procure it to the bedevilment of the *Leader's* own afternoon paper, the *Evening News*. The *Leader* now added the name *Herald* to its own title. The *Evening News* became the *News and Herald*, a name it carried for twenty years until it abandoned its identity to enter the combination which is now the *Cleveland News*.

The disappearance of the *Herald* attracted wide attention in newspaper circles. The *Leader*, counting on an easy acquisition of the *Herald's* circulation, was disappointed, though for years it continued to enjoy a superiority over the *Plain Dealer*. Practically the whole *Herald* editorial staff came over to the *Plain Dealer*, bringing its Whig-Republican training into this Democratic camp.

In the first issue of the new morning *Plain Dealer* the editor offered his articles of faith:

We shall publish a first-class Democratic paper and at all times be watchful of the rights of man, holding that the man is superior to government, and that all government should be for the good of the governed. We shall follow as near as we can the principles of Democracy as enunciated by Jefferson and other great teachers; and we shall support the present administration in all measures where it is true to Democratic principles; man first, the country second and the party third. . . .

We shall endeavor to make the *Plain Dealer* the leading paper in the state in educational reforms, and in all matters pertaining to art and literature and to moral and esthetic culture. While we shall be known as a secular paper, we shall hold our columns open to all religious truth which leaves the church free and the state independent. . . .

We shall endeavor to discuss all public measures fairly and honestly, granting to others, as we ask for ourselves, confidence in the sincerity of our convictions. . . .

As the home is the thermometer of civilization, we shall take great

pains to make the Plain Dealer a home and family paper, under whose influence manly purpose, love of labor, of economy, of education and of upright life and the love of country may be fostered. To these ends we solicit the good will and the patronage of our fellow citizens.

The *Leader* was soon complaining that, using the words of the *Cincinnati Commercial Gazette*, the *Plain Dealer* was "masquerading as a Democrat in Republican disguise. It has all the respectability and dullness of the old *Herald*."¹¹

Reminiscent of Civil War and Reconstruction days, was the *Leader's* own comment:

The new Plain Dealer is trying to conduct itself as a very meek non-partisan paper with the hope of getting some of the former *Herald's* subscribers. Yet it is the same old unscrupulous Bourbon copperhead sheet that it has been during the past twenty-five years. . . .¹²

It is not to be doubted that the new owners of the *Plain Dealer* would have established morning and Sunday editions before long, regardless of the procurability of the *Herald*. The expansion was due. There was now enough capital behind the enterprise to ensure success, given sagacious counsels and sound management. The part the *Herald* played in the drama was a useful one, even if unheroic. The time had passed when a multiplicity of newspapers in a community could be deemed a public blessing. Now the paper which for years before either the *Plain Dealer* or the *Leader* was born had bravely carried the torch of civic enterprise had slipped and fallen in the race. Men should — and did — regret the incident, but there was nothing that could be done about it.

Now for the first time the *Plain Dealer* was ready to challenge the long-dominant *Leader*, asking no odds. The *Leader* — to use its own words — had at last a foe worthy of its steel. Mornings, evenings, and Sundays the two papers met each

¹¹ Quoted March 19, 1885.

¹² March 25, 1885.

other in merciless competition. The *Leader* had the advantage of being Republican in a Republican community. It enjoyed the momentum of success. The *Plain Dealer* had the advantage of being managed by younger men. The *Leader* was soon made aware of the fact that it must fight and fight hard if it would retain the dominance which the genius and character of Edwin Cowles had given it.

The contracts and physical properties of the *Herald* were by no means the only assets which the skillful bargaining of Bulkley brought to the *Plain Dealer*. It brought to the paper also men who were already, or would later become, stars of high magnitude in the local journalistic firmament.

Chief among them was J. H. A. Bone, who had been for nearly thirty years a member of the *Herald* editorial staff and the paper's editor-in-chief since the death of George A. Benedict in 1876. Charles E. Kennedy, advertising manager of the *Herald*, was a future manager and editorial director of the *Plain Dealer*. George R. Agate, *Herald* cashier, would remain with the *Plain Dealer* for many years, acting at various times as business manager, secretary, and treasurer.

The first three months of 1885 thus marked a major turning point in the century's story of the *Plain Dealer*. Its days of underdog existence would soon pass. A new factor had entered Cleveland's public life.

The importance of these developments would become increasingly obvious as the years ahead unfolded the drama of a rapidly growing industrial city.

At forty-three the *Plain Dealer* of Gray and Armstrong faced a rate of growth and a measure of influence which would make it outstanding among the newspapers of America.

CHAPTER II

CLEVELAND IN 1885

*The city is hard on the heels of Cincinnati in the race
for population supremacy. Great business
expansion in twenty years.*

MIDWAY in the ten-year period of Cleveland's growth as an industrial city which James H. Kennedy called the "wonderful decade," the *Plain Dealer* entered on the third phase of its own history.¹ The city of 1885 represented a substantial fulfillment of promises. At the same time it offered new pledges of a far greater community to follow.

For a newspaper as passionately devoted to the Democratic Party as the *Plain Dealer* was fifty-seven years ago, the political outlook seemed particularly bright. Ten days before the *Plain Dealer* absorbed the major portion of the *Herald* Grover Cleveland was inaugurated, the first Democrat in the White House since before the Civil War. George Hoadley, Democrat, was Governor of Ohio. A Cleveland Democrat, Henry B. Payne, a lifelong friend of the *Plain Dealer*, was in the United States Senate. A Democratic legislature was making laws for Ohio.

¹ James H. Kennedy, an older brother of Charles E. Kennedy, was successively city editor and news editor of the *Leader* and managing editor of the *Herald*. He wrote a popular history of Cleveland. He was born at Farmington, Ohio, in 1849; died at Pasadena, California, January 23, 1934.

Near the end of 1884 the *Plain Dealer* had said: "The ensuing year will be one of the most interesting of the century. The 'new deal' will interest everybody. . . ." ²

The mayor of Cleveland in 1885 was George W. Gardner, and Gardner's private secretary was William E. Lewis, who had left the *Plain Dealer* editorial staff to take the post at the City Hall.³ By legislative order the affairs of Cleveland were administered by a plan of government outstanding for its cumbersomeness even in a city accustomed to the role of guinea pig for political experimentation. It was a bicameral system, with a Board of Aldermen of twenty-five members and a common council of fifty, chosen two from each ward.

In this same year, however, the Legislature changed the plan far enough to reduce the number of aldermen from twenty-five to nine. The *Leader* called it a "ripper" designed to assure Democratic control of the city. If that was the purpose, it failed, because the 1885 election gave Republicans control at the City Hall.

Not for another decade was Cleveland to overtake Cincinnati in the population tables and become the first city of Ohio. But the outcome of the rivalry was already clearly foreseen.⁴ Cleveland was the twelfth American city in size and Cincinnati eighth by the federal census of 1880. Ten years previously

² December 18, 1884.

³ Lewis was one of three brothers, all born and schooled in Cleveland, who made marks in journalism. Irving J. was city editor of the *Plain Dealer* when William E. began on the same paper as a reporter. The third brother, Alfred Henry, became city prosecutor in Cleveland before turning attention to literature. The journalistic career of William E. Lewis took him to Kansas City, to Chicago, where he became managing editor of the *Times*, to New York, where he became editor of the *Morning Telegraph* and later president of the publishing company. He died at Great Neck, Long Island, October 28, 1924.

⁴ The *Plain Dealer* prophesied on December 31, 1884 that five years thence Cleveland would have a larger population than any other city in Ohio and would be the largest city on the Great Lakes excepting only Chicago. The prediction was not fulfilled.

Cleveland had been fifteenth and Cincinnati eighth. By 1890 Cleveland had climbed to tenth, while Cincinnati retained her old rank. A longer view of what was happening may be had by remembering that in 1840 Cincinnati had been sixth among American cities and Cleveland forty-fifth!

In this "wonderful decade," next to the last of the century, Cleveland's rate of growth was 63.20 per cent, against Cincinnati's 16.37. Such speed in expansion is no longer seen among American cities. Perhaps its importance was overstressed half a century ago. But certainly no picture of Cleveland in the middle eighties would be even half-way complete were figures touching population growth omitted.

The Board of Health gave the city a population of 205,446 in 1885. Publishers of the city directory insisted on the figure 229,138 and declared the city was growing at the rate of 600 a month. The character of the growth had remained fairly constant through the preceding twenty years. Of the city's total population in 1880, 100,737 were of American birth and 59,409 of foreign birth. The 1890 census was to show 164,258 natives to 97,095 foreign-born to compose the population of 261,353. The percentages had remained fairly constant since before the Civil War. The spirit of the community was high.

But population was by no means Cleveland's chief concern in 1885. Good red ore was pouring down from Lake Superior to feed the city's expanding mills. Good black coal was coming in vast volume by rail for export up the lakes. A year's receipts of coal exceeded a million tons.

Cleveland oil refineries were contributing liberally to the prosperity of the city as well as to that of their owners, chiefly the Standard Oil Company. Early in the eighties the annual output of refined petroleum had reached more than 7,000,000 barrels. Well before the end of the decade, Ida M. Tarbell was to write that John D. Rockefeller "had completed one of the most perfect business organizations the world has ever seen, an organization which handles practically all of a great natural re-

source." What she called the "epidemic of public inquiry" came to plague the Standard in 1888.

Adding to Cleveland's industrial stability and promise at this period was a yearly output of barrels exceeding 4,500,000, the manufacture of 2,000,000 pounds of tobacco products, \$42,000,-000 worth of machinery and \$12,000,000 in railway equipment turned out from the city's scores of manufacturing concerns; the handling of 200,000,000 feet of lumber and the processing of 600 tons of fresh fish caught in Cleveland's front yard.

There were some two-score prosperous financial institutions catering to the welfare of the city. Among them were eight national banks and the Society for Savings.

Such figures explain a good deal. They show, for one thing, why the men and women of Cleveland in this "wonderful decade" saw a great future for their community, redoubling their efforts to make the promise good.

By annexation of adjacent areas, as well as by business expansion and accretion of population, Cleveland had since the war continued its forward push. The 1880-90 decade itself saw no additional territory taken into the city, but during the previous ten-year period the municipal boundary lines had been extended east and south.

The major annexation had been that of East Cleveland.⁵ It moved the city's eastern boundary from what is now East 55th Street to East 118th Street. This was achieved in October 1872.

A second important addition of territory came at the end of

⁵ There have been no less than five municipalities of East Cleveland in the history of Cuyahoga County. The first, chartered in 1866, was annexed to Cleveland in 1872. The second, immediately to the east of the other, was chartered soon thereafter but in 1879 was abandoned as a village, the territory being absorbed in East Cleveland township. The hamlet of East Cleveland was set up in 1890 and became a village five years later. This gave way to the City of East Cleveland in 1911. Except for the shortlived village of 1879, which was larger in extent, all these municipalities following the 1872 annexation covered practically the same area now included in the suburban city.

the next year when a portion of Newburg township was annexed, pushing Cleveland's southern limits to Garfield Park. Three other minor annexations were made in the period just before. The city's total area in 1880 had reached 27 square miles. By 1941 this figure would be 73.35 square miles.

Cleveland's expanding area and the process of developing the suburbs called for more adequate transportation and horse-drawn street cars rattled in slow tempo over many new lines. The horses must have pricked up their ears when in July 1884 America's first electric car was given a trial run on Quincy Avenue. It was the thumbs-down sign for every street-car horse in the country and promised what in those days was considered rapid transit for urban dwellers.⁶

The day of larger units in urban transportation had not yet come, and in 1885 there were seven street railway companies carrying passengers in Cleveland. They were forerunners of the single corporation which would emerge from Tom L. Johnson's ten-year fight for lower fares.

The foundations of Cleveland's brief glory as the motor-car manufacturing capital of the world were being laid in the middle eighties. Alexander Winton, who had come to America a penniless young Scot only a few years before, was in Cleveland by 1885 and soon began making bicycles. From two wheels to four, from leg power to gasoline power, the evolution was rapid. By 1893 Winton had a "horseless carriage" that would run. He was one of a notable group who turned out Cleveland-built cars and gave the city a leadership in that field, which, however, was lost to Detroit in 1905.

Warner & Swasey, destined to play a great part in Cleveland's fame and prosperity, was established early in the eighties. Sherwin & Williams were incorporated in 1883. Three years before,

⁶ When in 1885 the question arose in Chicago as to the adoption of electricity for street cars, Mayor Carter Harrison voiced a rather prevalent doubt when he declared he did not "want death dashing like a horrid monster through our streets."

the census had shown Cleveland as making one sixth of the country's total output of paints and varnishes.

The beginning of the city's great system of parks came in 1882 when Jephtha H. Wade deeded to the city the tract along Doan Brook which has since borne his name. This gift was to be followed by that of Gordon Park eleven years later. Finally, in 1896, came the presentation of Rockefeller Park, connecting the other two and completing the recreation area extending from University Circle to the lake. The two men who furnished the bulk of the capital for launching the *Plain Dealer* on the third phase of its development, Liberty E. Holden and Charles H. Bulkley, were particularly interested in park development. Both became members of the park commission set up in 1893. The name of the latter is perpetuated and his interest in parks symbolized in the name of the present Bulkley Boulevard west of the river.

Garfield Monument in Lake View Cemetery was in course of construction in 1885, to be dedicated five years later with elaborate ceremonies. The previous year saw the destruction by fire of Marcus A. Hanna's Opera House which John A. Ellsler had ruined himself in building in 1875. It was immediately reconstructed on a more elaborate scale and stood for many years, until supplanted by the Hanna Theater on another site.

Music Hall on Vincent Street (now Avenue) was in its glory, bringing the muse uptown from its long sojourn on Bank Street (now West 6th) where the old Academy of Music stood for several decades before it succumbed to flames in 1892. The same fate ultimately brought Music Hall to its end. The Cleveland School of Music was started in 1884 by Alfred Franklin Arthur.

Thus the Cleveland of the "wonderful decade" was a community of culture and appreciation of the arts, as well as a humming industrial center proud of its stacks and its bank balances. B. A. Hinsdale, former president of Hiram College, was superintendent of the Cleveland schools from 1882 till 1886 and

under his direction the system showed great improvement both in physical plant and in methods of instruction. In the four years the number of pupils grew from 26,990 to 32,814.

In higher education, too, Cleveland was making advances which were of far-reaching importance to the history of this section of the country. In 1882 Western Reserve College was brought from Hudson to Cleveland and rechristened Adelbert.⁷ It was on its way toward a university status. In 1884 a formal charter was granted to Western Reserve University and a notable career in educational leadership began.

Next-door neighbor to Reserve, Case School of Applied Science was completing its main building in 1885 and before the year was ended instruction was begun in the uncompleted structure. James D. Cleveland, former associate editor of the *Plain Dealer*, was to serve as president of the Case board during the last ten years of his life.

The year 1885 also saw Cleveland's first woman lawyer admitted to the bar. She was Mary P. Spargo, and she succeeded in her profession despite the general assumption that practice at the bar was no proper calling for a lady.

In 1883 the voters of Ohio had defeated a prohibition amendment to the state constitution, after a hard-fought campaign in which the women of Cleveland showed a quality of political generalship which surprised the male section of the community. To many it may seem a logical observation that, two years after the rejection of the amendment, the Cleveland city directory recorded 1,418 saloons doing business in a community of a few over 200,000 people.

⁷ The migration and rechristening of the college grew out of the benefaction of Amasa Stone (1818-83). Stone gave the institution an original endowment of \$500,000 on condition that it come to Cleveland and take the name of his only son, who had lost his life while a student at Yale. Stone's other children were Flora, who married Samuel Mather and has her name perpetuated in Flora Stone Mather College of Western Reserve University; and Clara L., who became the wife of John Hay, diplomat and biographer of Lincoln.

The old question of what use should be made of the Public Square, discussed from time to time almost from the moment the plat was dedicated, arose again in 1885 when a committee of the council recommended that a long-needed City Hall be erected on one corner of it. Fortunately, the report was tabled. Public sentiment was obviously opposed to the project.

The Public Square remained, what it had been from the beginning, the center of Cleveland life and in an important sense the particular object of her affections. Since the Civil War business had by a slow process worked past the barrier of the Square and was by now making its slow but steady progress eastward along Euclid and Superior.

The fact that the Stillman Hotel, opened in 1884, was located east of what is now East 9th Street indicated what was taking place in the relocation of the city's centers of activity. No less significant was the decision of the Stillman's owners, after a fire had seriously damaged the hotel in the first year of the new century, to raze the building because rising land values convinced them that its site was more valuable for other uses.

In mid-March 1885 an advertisement in the *Leader* declared that the Hollenden — a "new hotel on the European plan" — would be open for business early in April. The Stillman and the Hollenden were the only important hotels east of the Square.

Though the vista of Euclid Avenue to one looking from the corner of the Square was that of a thoroughfare pretty solidly lined with business structures, it remained true that the bulk of the city's trading, retail and wholesale, was still done either on the Square or between it and the river. Business was moving steadily eastward, but had not yet got very far. Such houses as Hower & Higbee and E. I. Baldwin, Hatch & Co., forerunners of famous stores of the years to come, clung to their locations west of the Square. James F. Ryder, friend of Artemus Ward nearly thirty years before, still maintained his photograph gallery and his art-goods store on lower Superior.

The visitor to the Square in 1885 could still admire much of

its original unspoiled natural beauty. There were trees in profusion. In the southeast quarter stood the Perry Monument, then just beginning its famous travels, which led in time to a site in Gordon Park. An artificial lake and waterfall occupied much of the southwest quarter, and were spanned by a rustic bridge from which the sons and daughters of the city's next generation could look down with admiration on a small model steamboat riding the tiny waves below.

From the bridge, too, one could see an unbroken line of business structures, with their nearly uniform four-story sky-line, inclosing the Square on the south and west. The Forest City House was there, occupying part of the site of the present Hotel Cleveland. Where now stand the Williamson and Cuyahoga buildings stood earlier business structures. An earlier Postoffice occupied the site of the present Federal Building. Facing the Square from across Rockwell Street on the north was the Courthouse, to which two stories had been added the year before, the Old Stone Church and the Wick Building, and a few other structures now long since destroyed in the name of progress.

The physical services for the city's rapidly expanding population required facilities unforeseen but a short time before. The year 1885 saw the completion of the Fairmount and the Woodland Hills reservoirs far to the southeast to meet future water requirements which new residence and business communities made obvious. The opening of these made possible the early abandonment of the famous old Kentucky reservoir and the turning of its site into a city park, later to be given the name Fairview.

Cleveland's increasing commerce by water directed popular attention to the need of a harbor of refuge and the federal government recognized it with generous appropriations. The *Plain Dealer* insisted it had been the first paper to advocate building such a harbor, a claim which the *Leader* and the *Herald* did not hesitate to dispute. Whoever first suggested the idea, it was Congressman Richard C. Parsons who directed the effort at

Washington to get the money. And Parsons and the *Plain Dealer*, being of opposite parties, were never in these years very friendly.

The western arm of the breakwater was completed in 1883, and by 1886 Congress was ready to supply money for the easterly arm, which was eventually to reach Gordon Park.

Cleveland men, Cleveland capital, and Cleveland-made products were bringing the city fresh renown abroad and fresh cause for confidence and satisfaction at home. Charles F. Brush, inventor and scientist, was one of the leaders of the community. In the summer of 1876 the Public Square saw a public demonstration of his history-making electric arc light. This son of Euclid and citizen of Cleveland was in 1881 made a chevalier of the French Legion of Honor in recognition of his services to society.

This was the Cleveland of the "wonderful decade," in the midst of which the morning and Sunday *Plain Dealer* made their initial bow; in which the unpretentious little weekly of the Grays set itself for the fulfillment of its destiny. Many unaccountable things had happened in the world, in the community, and in the field of newspaper publication since that far-distant January day in 1842 when the brothers from St. Lawrence County offered their resounding salutatory.

In a great sense, however, this was the same Cleveland and the same *Plain Dealer* as before. Both had grown in power and influence. They had prospered in partnership. They would continue to do so.

CHAPTER III

LIBERTY EMERY HOLDEN

Son of a Maine farmer, college professor, attorney, interested in mining and real estate, he takes control of the Plain Dealer and sees it prosper.

FOR the second time in its history the *Plain Dealer* in 1885 found itself under the ownership of a man born on a New England farm who had come west to share the promise of a newer country. For the second time a former school-teacher who had been admitted to the bar but did not care to practice law became the owner of northern Ohio's Democratic organ and spokesman.

Liberty Emery Holden, founder of the morning and Sunday *Plain Dealer*, thus far fitted into the pattern set by Joseph William Gray, whose establishment of the evening edition forty-three years before had started the paper on its long career. It would be a mistake, however, to press the comparison too far. In most respects the two were little alike.

A family tradition reaching back to the earliest days of the American Revolution explains Liberty E. Holden's unusual first name. John Holden was one of Massachusetts' minutemen, a lieutenant of the military force set up by the colony in 1774. A baby was expected in the Holden family about the time the war really broke out in earnest. John declared that if the little stranger proved to be a boy his name should be Liberty, watchword of the patriots. The intention was unassailable, but the prudent young mother objected to giving so small and defense-

less a person such a militant prefix; besides, it might be a bit dangerous if events at the front went against the liberty men.

The more cautious counsel prevailed, and the intended Liberty was christened Peter. But the confident patriotism of the minuteman was finally not to be denied. When Peter in turn became father of a son, he gave him the name his father had so fondly intended for himself. This son was named Liberty. And this Liberty was father of Liberty Emery Holden, who bought the *Plain Dealer* at the end of 1884 and all he wanted of the *Herald* a few months later.

Liberty Emery Holden was proud of his Puritan stock. A maternal ancestor, Isaac Stearns, came to Boston in May 1630, with Governor Winthrop. A paternal ancestor came four years later. This background was woven into the character of Liberty E. Holden, whose pride of family was a constant incentive to his own achievement.

He was born on a farm at Raymond, Maine, June 20, 1833, the oldest of eleven children. This was a day when boys were bound to their fathers, and if a son wished to get an education, as did the eldest in this family, he was expected to pay for a substitute on the farm.

Though Mr. Holden was later accustomed to look back on the days of his boyhood with a sentiment akin to reverence, his distaste for the hard manual labor of the farm was early manifest. In that day there was probably as much money to be made in farming as in teaching, but Liberty Holden's mind turned irresistibly away from the furrow to the path of learning.

He hungered for education and, in the American way, took the steps necessary to acquire it. With this desire for mental training was coupled the wish to teach, to become a leader, to help open the minds of others to the richness of the intellectual life. Once started on this career, Liberty Holden's active mind turned toward the setting sun and the opportunities the great West offered one who qualified himself to take advantage of them.

Combining the work of the farm with a fruitful use of his spare hours, and encouraged by his mother, the young man by the time he reached his eighteenth birthday was teaching school in the neighborhood. The magic of an eager, inquisitive mind was already beginning to re-enact the oft-repeated story of American youth's triumph over difficulties.

Significant has been the influence of school-teachers on the course of the *Plain Dealer*. Gray and Holden were teachers. Gilbert W. Henderson, long chief editorial writer, was a teacher. Erie C. Hopwood, editor-in-chief in more recent years, was a teacher. Russell Weisman, present chief editorial writer, has long been a member of the faculty of Western Reserve University. In a sense, none of these school men ever quite abandoned the pedagogical role.

By the time he was twenty-one Liberty Holden was ready to enter Waterville College, now Colby University, in Maine. Still supporting himself by teaching, he continued through his sophomore year at Waterville and then, still teaching, came to the University of Michigan, where he was graduated in 1858 and was given a master's degree three years later. These three years he spent at Kalamazoo College, a branch of the state university, as a professor of rhetoric and English literature.

Until now, it appears, the young man from Maine had no other expectation than that of devoting his life to scholastic pursuits. The role of professor at some agreeable seat of learning strongly appealed to his type of mind. He had drawn a curtain on New England and the hard physical tasks of his youth. A new realm had opened to him — the realm of the mind and the cultivated spirit. He would thenceforth dwell contentedly with the elect of the ages.

As has happened in so many individual careers, a woman stepped into the picture at this point. The professor became instead a business man, a capitalist, a newspaper publisher, a civic leader in a rapidly growing industrial community. Such a story has been told often, differing only in details.

In this case the young woman was Delia Elizabeth Bulkley, a daughter of Henry Guerdon Bulkley, who had been a professor of mathematics in the East, though at this time he was working on an invention for drying lumber.¹ He had come with his family to Michigan, rich in its timber resources. His daughter, Delia, and his son, Henry, were enrolled at Kalamazoo. She, one of the few women students in the college, found herself a pupil in some of Holden's classes. Then and there, without trumpets or previous notice, Liberty Holden's plan of life was given a new direction.

The professor and his pupil were married at Kalamazoo in 1860. A year later they moved to Tiffin, Ohio, where the slightly larger salary of a superintendent of schools furnished an irresistible first stepping stone away from the cloistered life. The young man had by now begun the study of law and in 1862 went to Cleveland to finish his legal preparation in the office of Judge J. P. Bishop. Though admitted to the practice of law, Liberty Holden never took much advantage of the certificate the state had given him. His mind was by now turning in other directions.

This was not Holden's first contact with Cleveland. On his way from Maine to enter the university at Ann Arbor, the boat which he had taken at Buffalo made a long stop at the mouth of the Cuyahoga. Its passengers had opportunity to study the little city, its Public Square with its cluster of residences, and its business district stretching to the river. The young man was impressed with the coming importance of the town, but had no idea at the moment that he would ever have a part in its history.

Now the Holdens, still bride and groom, became residents. He was licensed to practice law. By 1864 Mrs. Holden's brother, Charles H. Bulkley, had come to Cleveland to study law, also in Judge Bishop's office. Bulkley, like his brother-in-law, would

¹ Delia Elizabeth Bulkley was born at Steventown, New York, May 22, 1838. She married Liberty E. Holden at Kalamazoo, Michigan, August 14, 1860, and died at Pasadena, California, June 25, 1932.

play a part in the future story of the *Plain Dealer*. The two men were to be associated in business and civic enterprises.

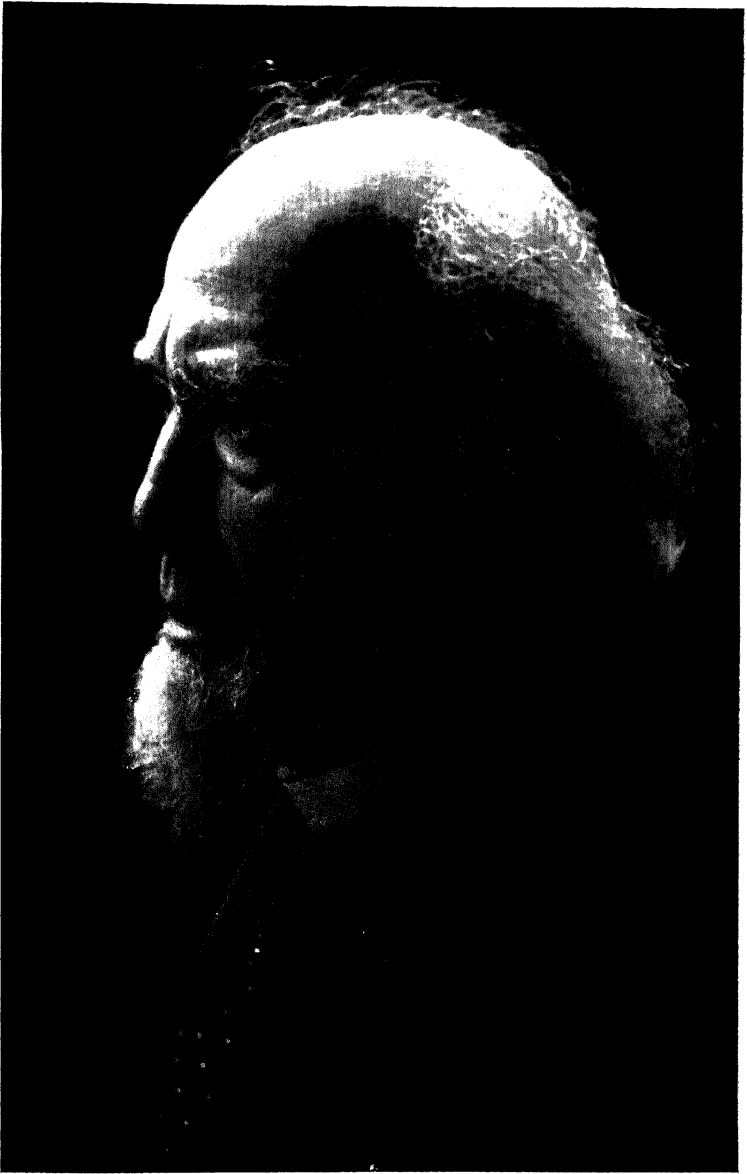
Liberty Holden was among the first to see the real-estate possibilities which lay ready for achievement in East Cleveland. That municipality then extended as far west as Willson (now East 55th) Street. In some instances associated with Bulkley, he developed allotments and marketed tracts soon to be covered with residences. The population pressed eastward. The Holdens in time established their home on land now covered by the Adelbert College and Case School campuses.

With capital accumulated in these real-estate operations, Mr. Holden in 1873 turned his attention to the Lake Superior ore ranges. He had satisfied himself that America stood at the threshold of an age of steel and sought a part in it by investment in iron mines. He later sold his interests for about four times what he had paid for them and felt he was doing very well. Most people, had they been asked, would have agreed with him.

But shortly after this another man came on the scene with greater scientific acumen than the Cleveland man possessed. This man, too, had money to invest. He was Alexander Agassiz, who satisfied himself that this was to be an electrical age. He put his money into copper mines and in time realized from his investment in Calumet Hecla alone probably fifty times that Mr. Holden had made from his in iron.

Experience confirmed Mr. Holden's opinion that more money was to be made in mining than in Cleveland real estate, profitable as the latter had proved to be. In 1874 he turned his attention to the silver-lead mines in Utah. Supplementing his own capital with that provided by friends and associates in Cleveland, he bought a mine known as "Old Telegraph." For many months he poured more money into this property than it appeared likely he would ever take out of it.

His co-investors lost heart, refusing to advance any more funds to be, as they thought, thrown away in a hopeless venture. Mr. Holden's unquenchable optimism, however, kept the

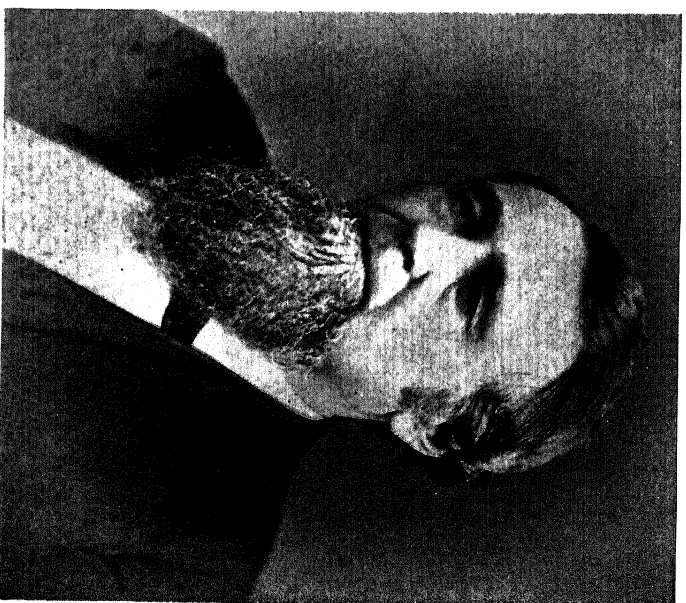


LIBERTY EMERY HOLDEN
Founder of the morning and Sunday Plain Dealer



J. H. A. BONE

One of Cleckland's most talented newspaper men. He came to the paper when the Herald suspended and remained till his death in 1906.



FREDERICK W. GREEN

He was half-owner of the Plain Dealer, with Mr. Armstrong, from 1867 till 1874.

enterprise alive. Suddenly his faith was justified. He struck ore, rich galena ore, carrying as high a percentage of lead and silver as had ever been mined in that region. He realized enough from this one strike to pay all his indebtedness and leave him a good margin of profit.

Mr. Holden later became the largest stockholder in the Old Jordan and South Galena mine which, like the Telegraph, was in the famous Bingham Canyon. Bingham did not become famous, however, for its lead and silver. Even at this time it was known that near by was one mountain largely composed of copper-bearing rock, but of such low grade as to be unprofitable for smelting. Years after Mr. Holden had sold his holdings in Bingham a process for mining low-grade copper ore was developed and the canyon became known as the site of one of the world's most famous copper mines, the "Utah Copper."

For years the Holdens had divided their time between Cleveland and Utah. By the early eighties, however, he was disposing of many of his Western interests and giving practically all his time to his possessions and activities in Cleveland. One consideration was that the schools at Salt Lake City seemed unsatisfactory to the parents of a growing family. Cleveland made a strong appeal to them both for the advantages it already gave and the promises it held out.

In 1884 Holden built the Hollenden, which, originally intended as the city's first apartment house, became instead Cleveland's leading commercial hotel. By this time he had become a leading figure in the community — a scholarly man of business, a civic-minded citizen who could always be counted on to help sponsor any movement for the city's betterment.

Just when Mr. Holden's mind first turned to the idea of owning the *Plain Dealer* is not recorded. In no sense, however, was it a sudden inspiration. An uncle of his, Ezra Holden, owned the *Philadelphia Courier* and from the time Liberty visited his family as a young man he was possessed of a desire some day to own a newspaper himself. Liberty Holden was past fifty be-

fore the dream was realized, but it was always a part of his life.

As to why he wanted the *Plain Dealer*, there was one standard oft-printed answer, but it was an answer obviously inspired by hostility. This was, of course, to the effect that Holden, being a silver producer and an advocate of bimetallism, bought the paper as a forum from which to advocate a policy that would mean much to himself financially.

The *Plain Dealer* had argued for bimetallism years before Mr. Holden had any interest in the paper. He himself had been a bimetallist years before he entered the publishing field.

It need not be considered improbable that Mr. Holden's interest in silver influenced his mind toward a vigorous advocacy of free silver — an advocacy made immeasurably more potent by his possession of a successful newspaper of long standing in its community. A manufacturer of steel is naturally a high-tariff apostle. Rail capitalists just as naturally favor legislation helpful to their industry — to themselves. This is neither an apology nor a boast. It is an illustration of fact as obvious as daylight.

Events have proved the fallacy of the arguments for bimetalism which echoed through the West half a century ago, but they have not altered the fact that many thousands of Americans of that day believed heartily and honestly in the doctrine. Indeed, for decades after the Civil War it was generally held by students of the problem that unless big new sources of gold were found, its continued use as the sole currency standard would be likely to keep the country in something like an economic rut. By this reasoning, the knock-out argument against free silver came not so much from the ballot box in 1896 as from the Klondike a few years later.

Mr. Holden was a man of strong convictions touching any issue which appealed to him as important. With school-teacherish zeal, this ex-professor sought the *Plain Dealer* as an agency for the expounding of principles and policies he believed essential to the welfare of the state. Through the pages of a news-

paper the voice of the teacher and lecturer would be magnified a thousandfold.

And, party interests, currency, and tariff disputation aside, Mr. Holden was inspired by a civic zeal which his friends knew and the community came gradually to realize. To make Cleveland a better city, to promote activities and institutions which would make Clevelanders better citizens — these desires lay deep in his character. The files of the *Plain Dealer*, beginning in the early days of his ownership, give plenty of evidence of his ardor in these respects. Here was a field ready at hand for the preacher of civic righteousness with a newspaper in hand to broadcast his teaching.

Besides, Liberty Holden was a bred-in-the-bone Jeffersonian Democrat. The local organ of his party was in financial distress. He would believe that good government, the welfare of the state, required that this or some similar newspaper enterprise be kept alive and prosperous. And he, the former college instructor, had the means in hand to give the *Plain Dealer* a new lease of life.

Down to 1893 Mr. Holden gave the *Plain Dealer* little personal attention. Following Armstrong's retirement in 1886, J. H. A. Bone became chief of the editorial force, though for the first three years Roman R. Holden had the title of editor-in-chief. The year of Chicago's first World's Fair, however, saw a decided change in the manner of conducting the paper.

Now for the first time the principal owner of the paper assumed its personal direction. At the beginning of the year Charles E. Kennedy, who had come to the *Plain Dealer* from the *Herald* when the latter suspended publication, but had more recently been in advertising work in New York, became general manager. Bone was now editor-in-chief, but in September his conduct of the editorial page displeased Holden and he was relegated temporarily to the desk of book reviewer.

Responsive to Mr. Holden's wish, the directors of the paper voted to "change the policy of the *Plain Dealer* editorial page

and to make all editorials shorter in length and of greater variety of subject," and to put " Mr. L. E. Holden and Mr. Charles E. Kennedy in charge of editorial work until other arrangements are made." Fortunately, Bone's exile was brief.

This year saw also the temporary disappearance of the name of the *Evening Plain Dealer* and the establishment in its place of the *Evening Post*.

More important than any of these changes, however, was Mr. Holden's decision to take command. For a time he wrote the principal editorials which involved *Plain Dealer* policy. They ranged the whole field of local, state, and national affairs. They dealt in particular with topics relating to civic progress.

For something like five years this new regime continued. Editorials which Holden did not write were carefully checked by him before publication, except when he was away on one of his many extended trips, of the course of which he kept *Plain Dealer* readers informed through voluminous travel letters. Whether writing editorials or describing as a tourist what he thought significant abroad, he remained the ex-teacher with a class before him to instruct.

Kennedy left the *Plain Dealer* in the summer of 1897 to become business manager of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. His departure deprived the paper of the services of a man thoroughly trained in every department of publication. Mr. Holden felt his loss keenly.

Mr. Holden now began to realize, as he had not realized before, that for the successful operation of a newspaper trained newspaper men were essential. The *Plain Dealer* was not making the progress it should. The principal owner was disappointed and doubtless a good deal puzzled. To his credit be it said that, once convinced of what was wrong, he was ready to take the necessary corrective step. The fact that the step was without precedent caused no hesitation.

The contract which Holden made in 1898 with Elbert H. Baker and Charles E. Kennedy for the management and con-

trol of the *Plain Dealer* marked a new epoch in the paper's history hardly less important than the Holden purchase itself. It gave the enterprise a new impetus toward the goal of its later achievements.

The owner sometimes chafed under the terms of the agreement. Perhaps he signed away more authority than he realized at the moment. He was made to feel occasionally that the mere ownership of a newspaper did not, under such a contract, empower him to do as he pleased with it. But if Mr. Holden was uneasy at times when he found he could no longer control the utterances or dictate the business policies of his own newspaper, the greater prosperity which came as a result of the Baker-Kennedy arrangement soon reconciled him to the new dispensation. Instead of continuing a liability, the paper now became an asset, increasing in productiveness from year to year.

For the remaining fourteen years of Mr. Holden's life the *Plain Dealer* was operated under contracts similar to that of 1898. Relieved of the burdens of personal management of the property and assured a continuous substantial revenue, the man who had believed that his country's welfare required the free coinage of silver came more and more to assume in the community the role of elder statesman in the civic sense.

To thousands of Clevelanders he was a familiar figure — courtly and gracious, approachable, never too busy with his own affairs to be interested in those of his friends or the community. A ready speaker, he was in frequent demand for occasions which called for the happy word well said.

Had the satirists of the Cleveland City Club been active then, they would have found grist for their mill in Liberty E. Holden. He would have liked it, too, for he possessed the too rare faculty of enjoying jokes on himself. On one occasion the Nisi Prius Club, an organization of Cleveland attorneys, made him the object of its sharp-edged satire and Holden had the time of his life listening as a special guest of the evening.

In his personal and family relations he was vibrant and re-

sponsive, looking for a sunny side to every episode. He carried a dauntless optimism into any venture that interested him. This led him at times to take chances in business from which more timid men would abstain. It stood the *Plain Dealer* in good stead at certain critical periods of its history under his ownership.

Always interested in outdoor recreation and a lover and student of nature, Mr. Holden played an important part in getting for the city Gordon, Wade, and Rockefeller Parks. Most of the land comprising the last Holden himself bought for the oil millionaire and philanthropist. He was influential in bringing the Cleveland Museum of Art into existence and was in 1905 president of the building commission responsible for the present magnificent structure which looks across the lake at University Circle. The Holden gifts of art objects, made by Mrs. Holden, comprise one of the museum's outstanding collections. Mr. Holden in his will left a sum to the museum to finance lectures on outdoor art, and another to care for the paintings.

Mr. Holden never lost his zeal to promote the better training of men and women through education for the opportunities that lay all about them. In his own home at Salt Lake he organized the Salt Lake Academy and became its first president. In Cleveland he early became a trustee of Adelbert College and was one of the founders of the Western Reserve Historical Society. He was a religious man who believed in all sincerity that the affairs of the world, his own included, were governed by a Providence, benign and omnipotent. He loved life both for the good things it brought and for the challenging obligations it involved.

Elected class poet on graduation from Michigan, this man of influence and achievement never abandoned the idea that he possessed a special gift of poesy. He loved to write verses, some of which the *Plain Dealer* published, and if the critics said they had small merit he felt himself under no obligation to agree with them.

Being a man of fortune, and Democratic nominations in his

vicinity not being in much demand, Mr. Holden was often "mentioned" for one office or another. According to the gossips, he was frequently on the point of announcing himself for Congress or the governorship. As a matter of fact, however, he never aspired to elective office. On one occasion, answering the suggestion that he run for the national House, he wrote:

I deem the crying evil of the time in which we live to be the corrupt use of money in elections. So great and widespread is the expectation for money at elections that scarcely any man of honor with money desires or dares to accept nominations for elective offices.²

Elective office and personal participation in politics aside, however, Mr. Holden welcomed the recognition and the opportunities for service which came to him through appointments to non-paying posts. He represented Ohio as a commissioner both to the Chicago Exposition in 1893 and to the St. Louis Exposition of 1904. He was proud of his membership on the Cleveland park board, a non-political group to which the city owes more than is often acknowledged. He was a delegate-at-large from Ohio to the Democratic national conventions in 1888 and 1896.

He was often the object of unmeasured abuse, much of it pouring from the offices of the *Cleveland Leader*. The torrent reached a high volume after Holden had become a member of the park board and began buying land for park and boulevard use. That the criticism was born of politics and business competition is pretty well indicated by the *Leader's* tribute of respect paid Holden after his death.³

Most successful men have been indebted to their wives for

² *Plain Dealer*, August 13, 1892. The man elected to Congress from this district that fall was "Chewing Gum" White, a Republican of quite ample wealth.

³ *Leader* editorial, August 27, 1913: "Mr. Holden . . . did much to create its [Cleveland's] splendid system of parks and boulevards, and he was a leader in promoting art and music, historical research and educational development, all for the benefit of the city which he chose for his home and the theater of his manifold activities. . . ."

much of their achievement. This was especially true in the case of Liberty Emery Holden. Delia Elizabeth Bulkley was a woman of rare intellectual gifts, of keen business sense, of stable judgment. On one occasion it was her good sense which prevented a sale of the *Plain Dealer* on terms which in retrospect seem ridiculously inadequate.⁴ She saved the paper for its owner in spite of him!

Liberty E. Holden died at his farm home in Mentor on August 26, 1913, two months past his eightieth birthday. He had set up a living trust empowered for twenty-five years after his death to direct the fortunes of the *Plain Dealer*. To this trusteeship he named his wife, Delia Elizabeth, his sons, Albert Fairchild and Guerdon Stearns, F. H. Goff, president of the Cleveland Trust Company, and Benjamin P. Bole, Mr. Holden's son-in-law.

The passing of Mr. Holden was recognized by the community and the state as the end of a career in many ways typical of the period it covered. His was the familiar story of American youth climbing by hard work and early self-denial to recognized leadership in business and civic enterprise. A curious, inquiring mind, which began reaching out for opportunity even while the boy was still following the plow in Maine, never lost its keenness for discovery. Mr. Holden would have made an excellent news reporter, so accurately attuned was his intellect to each day's interesting events.

From near the beginning of the Civil War to within a year of the first World War, Liberty E. Holden was continually identified with the progress of a rapidly growing industrial city. He touched this story of progress at many points. His influence will be felt long after those who knew him personally pass from the scene.

⁴ This offer was reputedly \$400,000. Armstrong had once offered the property for \$100,000. In the United States Senate in May 1929 George W. Norris of Nebraska publicly congratulated the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* for rejecting an offer of the International Paper & Power Co. of \$20,000,000 for the paper.

CHAPTER IV

ELBERT HALL BAKER, FOURTH FOUNDER

*Baker, under a broad-gauged contract with the owners,
starts the paper on a rapid climb to dominance
in its field. Charles E. Kennedy.*

ELBERT HALL BAKER has been aptly designated the *Cleveland Plain Dealer's* fourth founder.

The first was, of course, J. W. Gray, who established the paper as a weekly in 1842 and as an evening daily in 1845. The second was William W. Armstrong, who re-established it at the end of the Civil War after bad management had wrecked it. The third was Liberty Emery Holden, who bought the paper at the close of 1884, later merged with it the major assets of the *Herald*, and started it on the road to success which it has since followed.

Baker, the tanner's son, is given a place in the founding group because, taking control of the property after it had been steadily losing money for years, he gave it new standards, new ideals, a new sense of harmony with its times and its community, set for it a new goal, and by the force of his own character and ability made a new and better *Plain Dealer* out of the old.

It detracts nothing from the credit due other builders of the *Plain Dealer* to point out the obvious fact that the paper today, finishing its hundredth year, reflects more of the fundamental journalistic teaching of Baker than of any of the others. It is a Gray-Armstrong-Holden enterprise pursuing the path laid out for it by Baker.

Baker's ancestral background was identical with that of Gray and Holden. The family roots of all three were deeply embedded in the soil of England. The same ship which in 1630 brought one of Mr. Holden's maternal ancestors to America brought also a paternal ancestor of Mr. Baker's. Ancestry aside, however, Elbert H. Baker was thoroughly a product of the northern Ohio environment in which he spent all the years of his active business life.

He was born at Norwalk, fifty miles southwest of Cleveland, on July 25, 1854. His parents were Henry and Clara Maria (Hall) Baker. His grandfather was Dr. Jeremiah Hall, once president of Denison University, from whom the young Baker appears to have inherited a high idealism and a moral fiber which marked his career from the beginning. When Baker was eleven years of age, the family moved to Cleveland, and his identification with the city was practically unbroken for the remaining sixty-eight years of his life.

Elbert Baker early learned self-reliance. He had no choice. The family budget made no provision for the young man's education. At sixteen he got a job as clerk in a drug store in Kansas City, whither the Bakers had moved from Cleveland. By that time the boy had had little schooling, but that little was all he ever got. He was thenceforth strictly on his own. The culture and the well-stocked mind which distinguished him throughout a long life were self-acquired. He was a prodigious, understanding reader and a student of history in the making.

At nineteen Baker was back in Cleveland, working for a time in a hardware store. Four years later he mounted a stool as a bookkeeper in the *Cleveland Herald* office. Then, at twenty-three and married, he was embarked, though humbly, on a career of more than half a century identified with newspaper-making.¹ The *Herald* had by then passed its halcyon days; in

¹ Mr. Baker married Miss Ida Smith of Cleveland, June 1, 1876. She died at La Jolla, California, April 3, 1941.

less than ten years it was to disappear. From bookkeeping Baker soon switched to advertising and undertook the somewhat difficult task of persuading local business houses that what the *Plain Dealer* and the *Leader* were saying of the *Herald* was not true, and that space in its columns was really a bargain at the price he asked.

He must have been measurably successful, for in 1882 the *Leader* found it advisable to entice Baker away from the *Herald* at twice his old salary. He became manager of advertising and in time one of the directors of the publishing company.

By 1898 Liberty E. Holden, with the morning, evening, and Sunday *Plain Dealer* on his hands and their monthly deficits to wrestle with, was concluding that one thing a newspaper needed for success was trained newspaper sense in the front office. He had tried to get along without it, had tried personal direction of the enterprise, but under the hammering competition of the *Leader* of Edwin Cowles the *Plain Dealer* was making altogether too little progress to justify his investment.

There were two Cleveland men who, Holden had reason to believe, were qualified to meet the problem that was worrying him. Neither of them was then in the city, Charles E. Kennedy being in St. Louis as manager of the *Post-Dispatch* and Elbert H. Baker in New York City as manager of the foreign advertising of the same St. Louis paper.² Kennedy had been business manager of the *Plain Dealer* and enjoyed the confidence of the paper's owner. Even if Mr. Holden had not personally met Baker,

² Charles E. Kennedy was born at West Farmington, Ohio, May 17, 1856. Schooled at Western Reserve Seminary, he came to Cleveland at eighteen and began his newspaper career as a reporter under his brother, James H. Kennedy, city editor of the *Leader*. He joined the *Herald* in 1875, became managing editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in 1883, advertising manager of the *Plain Dealer* in 1885, its business manager in 1893, manager of the *Post-Dispatch* in 1897, co-lessee of the *Plain Dealer*, with Elbert H. Baker, in 1898, editor of the *Leader* in 1909. This last connection was brief. For the rest of his life he was identified with advertising. He died in Cleveland, June 12, 1929.

he could not be ignorant of his capabilities. Baker had proved he could sell advertising, and advertising was what the *Plain Dealer* particularly needed now. He and Kennedy were friends and former associates.

Thus the contract of 1898 was entered into between Liberty E. Holden, as chief owner of the *Plain Dealer* on the one hand, and Baker and Kennedy jointly on the other. It was a profit-sharing arrangement under which the two lessees were to operate the property, practically as if it were their own. It would pay the two men liberally if they succeeded in bringing the paper into big money. To share profits, however, profits must be made. To outsiders — particularly to the *Leader* — it looked like a gamble; to Baker and Kennedy it appealed as an opportunity.³ The contract itself was without precedent in the newspaper field. It set terms for the publication of the paper which continued but little changed until some years after Mr. Holden's death.

From 1898 till the end of 1906 the Baker-Kennedy copartnership under the lease continued, Baker taking the business and Kennedy the editorial management of the paper. Kennedy withdrew from the arrangement at the close of 1906, though the contract had some months still to run, surrendering his interest in it for twenty-five thousand dollars paid him by the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company. On its face this was a voluntary withdrawal on Kennedy's part, but Kennedy himself made it plain to everyone that in fact he had been forced out.

He blamed Albert Fairchild Holden, eldest son of Liberty, for the break. "A. F.," according to Kennedy, had no conception of what a newspaper should be, was ambitious to own the *Plain Dealer* himself some day, was inclined to meddle with Kennedy's prerogatives as editorial manager, and, finding Ken-

³ The *Leader* printed a slurring news story of the lease, May 5, 1898. "It is a well-known fact that the Plain Dealer has never paid expenses. . . . Mr. Holden . . . does not wish to carry the increased burdens and worry of an unprofitable newspaper."

nedy resistant, resolved to get rid of him. The son's influence with his father was unquestionably strong.

It would be quite profitless now to attempt an opinion as to the justice of Kennedy's complaint. When Kennedy left the *Plain Dealer* in 1897 to go to the *Post-Dispatch*, Liberty Holden had been most cordial in his expressions of esteem. Whether Kennedy was justified or not in his condemnation of the Holdens for dropping him as a co-pilot, he unveiled his bitterness for public inspection when, on becoming editor of the *Leader* in 1909, he turned its editorial batteries against the *Plain Dealer* and the Holdens in one attack after another.⁴

The reasonable explanation seems to be that the Holdens early perceived that the more dynamic member of the Baker-Kennedy partnership was Baker, and that for the purposes of the Holdens Kennedy was not essential. "As I have told you many times," A. F. wrote to his father in December 1899, "Mr. Baker is the brainiest man in your employ." This was in the second year of the Baker-Kennedy contract. It is, perhaps, not surprising that seven years later, when the contract was nearing expiration, the owner of the paper chose to deal thereafter with Baker alone.

It must not be assumed from this that Mr. Kennedy's contribution to the fast-climbing *Plain Dealer* was unimportant. It was, in fact, quite the opposite. Kennedy was editorial manager of the paper when it took two steps in the development of editorial policy of much future significance. In 1900 it refused to support Bryan for president, smashing a precedent as old as the

⁴ See *Leader* editorials of November 3, 4, and 5, 1909, for instance. "Organ of indecency" and "journalistic bootlick" were among the expletives which the paper now employing Kennedy hurled at the paper which he formerly managed. In his *Fifty Years of Cleveland* Mr. Kennedy denies that he was editor of the *Leader* and says the *Plain Dealer* gave him the title out of malice. The Cleveland city directory of 1909, however, calls him "editor-in-chief of the Cleveland Leader." The *Leader's* own masthead printed his name as that of a co-publisher of the paper, his associates being N. C. Wright and H. S. Thalheimer,

Plain Dealer itself.⁵ It made peace with Tom L. Johnson in 1901, laying the groundwork for an association to last as long as the great mayor lived.

Whether Kennedy or Baker was primarily responsible for these steps, there is no record to show. Kennedy at least bore the editorial title at the time. It may be taken for granted that both men agreed on any important policy, whichever mentioned it first.

Certainly it was Baker, not Kennedy, who bore the brunt of the first efforts to get the *Plain Dealer* off dead center in the last years of the century. His was the broader vision, the longer look ahead. He had such faith in the future of the paper that when in 1899 the owner wished to sell, Baker resisted the proposal though Kennedy favored it. Baker, better than Kennedy, realized the advantage that would come to all of them if a considerable portion of its revenue were regularly "plowed back" into the enterprise. This policy cost the lessees money at the moment; it would bring them greater profits in the years ahead.

Beginning on the first day of 1907 Elbert H. Baker was general manager of the *Plain Dealer*. He was, in truth, editor-in-chief though he chose not to take the title. He was publisher. He was the *Plain Dealer*.

As business head of the paper in 1898 it had been his first task to squeeze the water out of its circulation and adopt the policy, then rare among newspapers, of telling the exact truth about volume of business, even if the truth hurt.⁶ And in this case the truth did hurt. It hurt so much that Baker found much of his time in the early days of the first contract occupied by the task

⁵ Bryan in 1900 was the first Democratic candidate for president the *Plain Dealer* refused to support. Willkie in 1940 was the first Republican candidate for the office it had ever supported.

⁶ Mr. Baker explained to the writer that just before he assumed the business management of the paper his predecessor had broadcast a statement which claimed a circulation at least twice what the facts justified. Mr. Baker at once issued a new statement representing the situation exactly as it was.

of persuading advertisers that, from their own point of view, truth-telling about circulation was better than the policy of padded figures they had long been familiar with. In this the Baker point of view would in the not distant future be universally accepted in newspaper and advertising circles.⁷

The community responded to the new Baker philosophy. The *Herald* was gone and the *Leader* was heading into evil days. Cleveland was willing to forget that the *Plain Dealer* was Democratic in a normally Republican environment, in view of its obvious purpose to give the city a real metropolitan newspaper.

For years prior to Baker's coming the paper's receipts and expenditures had run along with practically no variation, the expenditures regularly exceeding the income. In his first year Baker increased receipts by \$62,000, in his second year by another \$87,000 and in his third by still another \$120,000.

So went the story of the Baker management. Each year a considerable portion of the income went back into the enterprise. When the price of print paper rose suddenly to a point which threatened the *Plain Dealer's* whole margin of profit, and the *Leader* refused to accept Baker's suggestion that the sale price of the two papers be increased, the *Plain Dealer's* new manager took a step characteristic of him. Instead of curtailing expenditures to meet the new \$40,000 a year drain, he went out and added another \$25,000 to it!

In other words, he contracted for a loop from the *Chicago Daily News* New York leased wire. It was Cleveland's first taste of leased wire service in news-gathering. The city took to it at once. Not only did Baker that year make the additional \$65,000

⁷ This policy of truth about circulation established by Baker led to the organization of the Association of American Advertisers (1899), which was later merged with the Audit Bureau of Circulations (1914). The latter was established "to take the guess-work out of the purchase of space for advertising in publications," to use its own words. Advertisers in newspapers today know what they are buying. Prior to Baker's advent as business manager of the *Plain Dealer* they had no way of knowing.

necessary to meet these two items of expense, but he turned in a comfortable profit on top of it.

The *Leader's* overconfidence in these first years played accurately into Baker's hands. The paper Cowles built had so long dominated the local field, seeing the failure of one device after another to bring the *Plain Dealer* into a commanding position, that when Baker and Kennedy took over the management the *Leader's* manager, Eugene H. Perdue, merely continued to scoff. Let these young hotspurs ride to their doom! He could not be bothered!

This was the *Leader's* error, and Baker's opportunity. By the time the Republican organ woke up, its competitor had acquired such momentum that it could not be stopped. The *Plain Dealer's* complete victory was still some years in the future, but the course and the outcome of the battle were already set.

Thus the passing of Kennedy from the picture meant little to the enterprise. Baker pushed forward as before. Increasingly as the years passed, the paper became a reflection of the character of its fourth founder.

It would, of course, be idle to insist that Elbert Baker originated such a policy as that of excluding editorial opinion from the news columns, but certainly he did breathe new life into the policy, putting to shame those who were giving it mere lip service. It was part of Baker's newspaper religion that news should be without color of editorial bias; that one's opponents should have the same adequate representation on the news pages as one's friends; that a newspaper's primary obligation was to report the news as it occurred, be it favorable or unfavorable to causes the paper might support in its editorial columns.

Readers familiar with the now universal insistence on a publisher's keeping his prejudices out of his news reports are likely to forget how recently and generally the offense was committed on the one hand and tolerated on the other. In Baker's early days with the *Plain Dealer* the only other outstanding newspaper publisher insisting on his standard in this respect was

Adolph Ochs with the *New York Times* he had acquired two years before Baker became business manager of the *Plain Dealer*.

These two men — the Westerner running a Western paper and the transplanted Westerner operating in the heart of the East — saw and were true to the same vision. News is fact; editorials are opinions based on fact. The publisher may, if he chooses, argue bizarre theories and tax the reader's credulity to the limit of patience, but he shall not, must not, let these opinions poison his news.

Baker sensed the new day in this, as he did in other aspects of newspaper publishing. He put into operation a policy which predecessors on this and other papers had talked about but did little to make effective. Years before, the *Plain Dealer* had given voice to the same idea.⁸ It remained for Baker to achieve the revolution. He made an effective principle of what to others had been merely a talking point.

Busy as he was building the new *Plain Dealer*, Baker found time for a multitude of outside duties, civic, business, religious, charitable. The best-remembered achievement in this field was in devising the formula which thirty years ago brought a ten-year traction war to a satisfactory end. As chairman of a Chamber of Commerce committee he devised and got state legislative sanction for the street-numbering system, unchanged since its inauguration in 1905. Again he was instrumental in breaking a deadlock between the city and the East Ohio Gas Company, on the expiration of a franchise in 1913.

After the passage of the Federal Reserve Act, which the *Plain Dealer* advocated, Baker was influential in the group which persuaded the government to make Cleveland the capital of the fourth district. When it came time to name a governor for the Cleveland federal bank a tacit offer came from Washington,

⁸ See editorial of May 11, 1886: the *Plain Dealer* "does not filter the news through a sieve of its own prejudices." It reserves "opinion to the editorial page."

through the *Plain Dealer's* staff correspondent, Ben F. Allen, to name Baker to the office. His answer was a prompt declination to have his name considered.

Following the re-election of Woodrow Wilson in 1916, the *Plain Dealer* having twice heartily supported him for the office, the President asked Allen to find out whether Baker would care to accept a diplomatic appointment. Again he expressed his appreciation of the President's thought, but declined. To Baker the biggest and most important job in the world, so far as he was concerned, was to direct the *Plain Dealer*. He did not believe that a newspaper man in public office could render suitable service to the office and to his newspaper at the same time. He must choose one or the other. Baker had no hesitation as to which he would serve.

Baker was one of the first to urge the adoption of the Cleveland Group Plan. Architect Frank E. Cudell brought the idea to the publisher soon after he and Kennedy had taken control of the *Plain Dealer*. Cudell had been making a study of architectural grouping of public buildings in European cities and believed his own city might profit by emulation. Baker took the suggestion to Tom L. Johnson. The mayor at first was not much interested, but persistent advocacy by Baker and others finally converted him, and he became its most effective sponsor.

It was habitual with Elbert Baker to analyze problems in their broadest perspective. Always he sought the answer which would seem sound and convincing not only at the moment, but next year, or decades hence. He invariably made this approach to an important question, whether it concerned a public issue or a matter pertaining to *Plain Dealer* development. As he saw it, the two could not be separated, so seriously did he take his responsibility to the public as a newspaper publisher.

When it became necessary for the *Plain Dealer* to provide itself larger quarters, a question arose in the inner counsels as to whether the building at Superior Avenue and East 6th Street should be expanded or the site and structure sold and an entirely

new building erected elsewhere. One opinion, strongly urged, was that the paper should build somewhere beside a railroad line, where cheaper land could be found, a less expensive type of structure would be feasible, and a great saving effected in haulage and other items.

Mr. Baker took the opposite view. He believed a paper like the *Plain Dealer* should have its habitation in the heart of the community it served; that its home should be in architectural harmony with its neighbors and be of such prominence that citizens would point to it with pride as evidence of the institution's permanence among them. He would as soon see the Cleveland Public Library in the Flats on a bend in the river as see the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* nestled in a railroad yard.

Happily, the Baker opinion was accepted. The then existing building was greatly enlarged. It stands today at a corner of the Group Plan, architecturally in keeping with its classic neighbors.

Another facet of Mr. Baker's character is illustrated by a routine incident. Lewis B. Williams, financial editor,⁹ came into the office one afternoon with the makings of a big story. The Everett-Moore Syndicate, interurban traction operators, would not be able to meet its interest payments due the next day. It was an exclusive story, Williams said. It would cause a sensation. It might start a panic.

Baker told Williams not to write the story. Instead, he got into immediate touch with a leading banker familiar with the facts and told him he would undertake to persuade the other papers not to print the explosive item of news, provided members of the syndicate would assign every cent of personal property and every asset they possessed toward meeting the claims of the creditors, and provided further that a strong committee of bankers be named to handle the delicate situation. The problem was ironed out on exactly these terms. The announcement of the

⁹ Mr. Williams is at this writing chairman of the board of the National City Bank of Cleveland.

failure, made in due time, carried with it the details of how the situation would be handled.

This was a typical Baker performance. He realized, what some publishers never seem to appreciate, that a newspaper cannot thrive on the distresses of its community. He promoted the welfare of the *Plain Dealer* by guarding carefully that of the city which supported it.

These qualities of character and the success they brought the paper gave Mr. Baker an ever wider recognition. He was a director of the American Newspaper Publishers Association from 1904 to 1924, and from 1912 to 1914 its president. He became a director of the Associated Press in 1916 and was soon a member of the executive committee.

In Cleveland he was long treasurer of the Young Men's Christian Association and one of the strongest boosters of the organization. This service was formally recognized in 1934 when "The Elbert H. Baker Fellowship Hall" was dedicated in the main building at Prospect Avenue and East 22nd Street. The Euclid Avenue Congregational Church, which he long served as a trustee, was also an object of his particular loyalty. He was regularly a team captain in the annual solicitation for Cleveland's great Community Fund, a member of the national war work council beginning with its inauguration in 1917. With all his manifold activities in various fields, he still found time for membership in many clubs, taking special pride in the Sons of the American Revolution and the New England Society.

Mr. Baker continued as general manager of the *Plain Dealer* from Kennedy's retirement in 1907 until 1920. Feeling then that his years of labor and his services to the paper entitled him to ease up a bit, he fathered a reorganization of the management which brought younger men into places of increased importance. Baker himself became president of the publishing company after the death of Mr. Holden in 1913. Finally, in the process of gradual retirement, Mr. Baker became chairman of the board, which title he retained until his death.

Such facts constitute the outline of Elbert Baker's career with the *Plain Dealer*. They sketch a record; they do not portray the man.

Success and acclaim never went to Baker's head. To the men and women who performed the myriad tasks of getting out the daily he was more the big brother than the boss. And a friendly, smiling, appreciative brother he was, whose office door stood always open. But beyond the open door was likely to be an empty room, for Baker might be somewhere down the hall, in the local room fraternizing with the city editor or in the associate editors' office chatting about editorials.

The experience of a young editor newly come from Columbus was typical. On his second day at work while he was busy cutting copy, a pleasant-faced man of medium height and square physique drew up a chair beside him, threw an arm about his shoulders, and inquired kindly about his personal welfare. It was Baker, of course; the young man had never seen him before. He sincerely hoped the new employee would like the *Plain Dealer*; he would surely find it a friendly place to work.

That was Elbert Baker as the older men and women on the staff like to recall him. In memory they still hear his quick sharp step on the marble floor of the long corridor. He was always in a hurry, yet had plenty of time to chat, for he was always interested in small things as well as in the great drama of life. His deep-set eyes behind the heavy-rimmed glasses were windows of an active brain, reflections of a heart which beat in kindness.

Cleveland remembers Elbert H. Baker as a great newspaper man and a force for civic betterment. His death on September 27, 1933 was recognized as a major loss to the community.¹⁰

¹⁰ Mr. Baker gave two sons to journalism. Frank S. Baker is president-publisher of the *News-Tribune* at Tacoma, Washington, and Alton F. Baker is president-publisher and editor of the *Register-Guard* at Eugene, Oregon.

CHAPTER V

TOM L. JOHNSON AND THE TRACTION WAR

*After some hesitation the Plain Dealer supports the mayor.
Through Baker it plays a great part in ending the ten-
year battle and establishing the Tayler Plan.*

TOM L. JOHNSON was back in Cleveland. The general opinion was that he intended to run for mayor. A young man who had just resigned from the editorial staff of the *Plain Dealer* walked across the street to the Hotel Hollenden to interview him.

Johnson liked reporters and was especially glad to see one who could tell him how the wind blew in the office of the Democratic daily. He needed friends and wondered if the *Plain Dealer* would support him if he ran for mayor. He was pretty sure the *Press* would do so, and even surer that the *Leader* and its evening paper, the *News and Herald*, as well as the *World*, would oppose him.

The prospective candidate told the newspaper man that he planned to talk the matter over with Liberty E. Holden. It would be better, his caller suggested, to see Charles E. Kennedy, co-lessee of the paper and its editorial manager. All right, he would ask Kennedy over to see him.

"No, Mr. Johnson, you go over and see Mr. Kennedy," was the ex-reporter's reply.¹

Johnson accepted the advice. His meeting with Kennedy, which soon followed, paved the way for an understanding be-

¹ The ex-reporter was Robert K. Beach, now head of the Ohio News Bureau, Cleveland.

tween the future mayor and the *Plain Dealer* which was to prove important to both of them. Johnson profited politically by the support the *Plain Dealer* gave him. The *Plain Dealer*, then approaching leadership in the local newspaper field, was benefited by its association with the rise of a popular idol.

Kennedy was skeptical at the beginning. He feared that Johnson was returning to Cleveland merely to strengthen the hand of the traction interests and not, as Johnson asserted, to help free the people of Cleveland from such domination. The meeting suggested by the former reporter resolved the doubts in the mind of the editorial manager. Thereafter Johnson and Kennedy became fast friends.

The attitude of the *Plain Dealer* toward Tom Johnson had theretofore been uncertain and not infrequently unfriendly. Johnston first came to Cleveland in 1879, a man of twenty-five, to bid for a street railway grant which he did not get. He ran for Congress from the 21st district in 1888, with *Plain Dealer* support, but was beaten by Theodore E. Burton. Two years later Johnson defeated Burton and in 1892 was re-elected over O. J. Hodge. By 1894 the paper had turned against Johnson, largely because of his advocacy of free trade, and Burton won the November majority. In 1896 Johnson flirted with the idea of running again, and the *Plain Dealer* complimented him for deciding not to. Four years later Johnson was mentioned as a probable nominee and the paper charged him, whom it called a New Yorker, with "meddling" in a political situation which did not concern him. Again he did not run.

Thus when Tom Johnson returned to Cleveland in the spring of 1901, announcing he had forsaken money-making to work for the common weal, he was justified in wondering whether he could count on *Plain Dealer* support in a contest for the mayoralty of the city.

After the meeting with Kennedy he knew that for the present at least he could depend on such support. The *Plain Dealer* backed his candidacy for mayor in five elections, was friendly

toward him as a candidate for governor, and, for the most part, supported his storm-tossed program for lower street-car fares.

The chief speaker at the Jackson Day banquet in Cleveland on January 8, 1901 was Tom L. Johnson. He had chosen this occasion to announce that he had quit business and would spend the rest of his life working for the general welfare. "I want no office," he declared; "I will accept none."

He referred to the question of street-car fares, then much alive in Cleveland, and gave his opinion that adequate dividends could be earned at three cents a ride.

In spite of Johnson's seeming determination not to accept office, less than three weeks later the *Plain Dealer* reported that a Johnson-for-mayor boom was under way.² Mayor John Farley had alienated a large element of his party, and Johnson appeared to be the only Democrat in sight capable of preventing his renomination.

On a Wednesday evening early in February³ a group of local Democrats, led by Harry Payer, called on Johnson at his Euclid Avenue residence and presented a petition with more than fifteen thousand signatures asking him to run for mayor. Johnson read a prepared statement "I will be your nominee if the Democratic primaries so will it." He declared for three-cent fares and universal transfers as essential features in all future traction grants.

At first hesitant about accepting Johnson's self-dedication to the public good, the *Plain Dealer* finally endorsed his candidacy for mayor after printing an interview which showed him in sympathy with a Chamber of Commerce plan for a two-year traction study, lower fares, a business administration, and lake front development. The paper said, in part:

Mr. Johnson is a man of unquestioned business ability and unimpeachable honesty. His capacity for managing large affairs has been frequently demonstrated. His ability to handle men as well as great business enterprises has been shown by his popularity with

² January 27.

³ February 6.

his employes and with working men everywhere. It is an important fact to be remembered in connection with his candidacy for the position of mayor that by force of character and tact he has been remarkably successful in managing those with whom he has been connected, but has not allowed them to manage him. Those who have known him best and watched him most closely have good reason for believing that if elected he would be the actual mayor of Cleveland and not the puppet of any party, faction or clique using his occupancy of the position for their advantage.⁴

The Johnson regime constitutes a long and highly important chapter of Cleveland history. Mention of it here is justified only to the extent that it relates to the story of the *Plain Dealer*.

Every one of Tom Johnson's major achievements in his eight and a half years at City Hall was accomplished with active *Plain Dealer* support. The paper rode with him in triumph; it usually shared his disappointments in defeat. At times it challenged details of his program; with the essence and purposes of the program it was continuously sympathetic.

The best-remembered single aspect of the Johnson regime is that relating to the traction war, which ended with the adoption of the Tayler franchise. It happens, too, that Elbert H. Baker's most conspicuous achievement, aside from his rebuilding of the *Plain Dealer*, is likewise identified with this long battle for the establishment of popular control of a great public utility.

The fight for lower fares began in Cleveland long before Tom Johnson thought of becoming mayor. As far back as 1887 Alderman R. J. Cooney introduced an ordinance calling for six tickets for a quarter.⁵ In the winter of 1896 Henry A. Everett sought a franchise to build three-cent lines. In the fall of 1897 Councilman William R. Hopkins offered an ordinance to cut fares on Woodland Avenue from five to four cents at certain hours and to three cents at other hours of the day.⁶

⁴ February 26, 1901.

⁵ Twenty years later Theodore E. Burton campaigned for mayor on a platform promising seven for a quarter, but was beaten by Johnson.

⁶ Many years later Mr. Hopkins was city manager of Cleveland and the center of a famous political battle.

But the real, determined, and successful battle for low fares and adequate public control awaited the advent of Tom Johnson at City Hall on that morning in early April 1901 when he assumed the office of mayor. With him seated, the bugle call was not long in coming. During this first Johnson campaign, when he was opposed by W. J. Akers, Mayor Farley and a Democratic council had attempted to enact a blanket renewal ordinance which the *Plain Dealer* and the Chamber of Commerce condemned. The attempt failed.

From the outset the *Plain Dealer* differed with the mayor on one important detail of the traction controversy. He preached the adequacy of a three-cent fare and insisted the figure should be written into any franchise adopted. The paper, while not arguing that such a fare was inadequate, doubted whether any group of men could be wise enough to determine what rate of fare would be just to the car rider and to the stockholder throughout the twenty-five-year period of a grant. This point of view rather than Johnson's found expression when finally the Tayler Plan was established.

"Cheap fare is not the only matter to be regarded in looking after the interests of the street car riders," the paper argued. "Good service is equally important."⁷

From the beginning of Johnson's first term until April 1908, the fight for three-cent fares went on almost without cessation. The traction interests, led by Marcus A. Hanna, fought desperately. In 1902 the federal plan of government, under which Cleveland operated, was attacked in court and ruled unconstitutional, and a new form of government was set up by the legislature — all for the purpose of so limiting the mayor's powers as to render him impotent against the street railway companies.

The attack failed, however. The election of 1903 gave Johnson such complete control at City Hall that even a municipal charter dictated by his enemies could not curtail his program for lower fares.

⁷ December 30, 1901.



TOM L. JOHNSON

The militant mayor is here shown in his "Red Devil" auto, famous throughout Ohio.



"PITY THE BLIND"

A Donahay cartoon in the Johnson-Burton mayoralty campaign in 1907. The eminent congressman is represented as a blind man begging support for the Cleveland Electric Street Railroad Co.

The Johnson traction war is a story of innumerable court injunctions, of midnight raids, of ingenious efforts to circumvent the enemy, of the incorporation of new traction companies, of the organization of a savings bank and its early disappearance, of calls for help from Washington and Columbus, of a popular mayor ever edging toward his goal, and of utility magnates desperately fighting rear-guard battles to escape annihilation. Hanna and his associates fought with injunctions. Johnson's weapon was the popular majority ready in these years to respond to his every call.

It was a story of mixed humor, pathos, and desperation. It was a battle of wits, a matching of resources, a clash of conflicting theories in the field of public transportation. Clevelanders whose memories go back to the beginning of the century recall Johnson's persistent efforts to bring low fare to the Public Square, with his track laid atop the pavement, his trolley poles set in barrels of sand.

Many recall, too, the incident of Reporter Ben Allen's dash into a formal dinner at the Union Club to tell John Stanley of the Cleveland Electric that the low-fare apostles were on the loose again, and of Stanley's instant departure for the scene of trouble, clad in his tails and planning defense strategy as he went. These were stirring days in Cleveland. The dominant figure all the time was Johnson.

Toward the end of 1907 it became apparent to many in Cleveland that the long battle was headed for a complete deadlock. This kind of warfare could not continue indefinitely. Johnson had been elected for a fourth term in November, this time defeating the distinguished Theodore E. Burton, and carrying a big councilmanic majority with him. The tide of battle in the courts had now turned in the mayor's favor. It was obvious that the Hanna interests could not win, though they might continue obstructive tactics. It was by no means clear that Johnson could win, great as had been his generalship.

The situation seemed ripe for some new kind of negotiation,

with concessions on each side if necessary to achieve a positive result. How could this be brought about? Seven years of fighting had left bitter antagonisms difficult now to erase.

The man who discovered the magic formula was Elbert H. Baker, general manager of the *Plain Dealer* and its sole lessee since the retirement of Kennedy. Under Baker's direction the paper had supported Johnson at practically every step, but it had done so in a manner not to create serious antagonism among Johnson's enemies.

In its terms the Baker proposal sounds almost absurdly simple. The difficulty of getting it accepted lay in the mass of accumulated hostilities growing out of the eight years of turmoil over the traction issue.

As far back as 1905 Johnson had suggested settlement of the controversy through the establishment of a holding company which would lease and operate all the existing lines, both new and old. Though the Cleveland Electric Street Railroad was not then interested in such a device, the Municipal Traction Company was organized in June 1906 in pursuance of the plan.

After the 1907 election Johnson again proposed the lease as a way to peace. At the end of November the old company once more rejected the plan. Nevertheless, it appeared to most observers that the only way out of the difficulty lay in the acceptance of some such leasing device as Johnson had urged.

Elbert Baker now conceived the idea that the issue might be resolved by mediation if each party to the controversy — the city council on the one hand and the Cleveland Electric Street Railroad on the other — would select a single spokesman and clothe him with enough authority to make quick and vital decisions across the table. With little difficulty he persuaded City Hall to name Mayor Johnson. With much greater difficulty he persuaded the railway directors to choose Frederick H. Goff, and then persuaded Goff to leave a lucrative law practice to undertake this payless and probably thankless task.

Thus the Baker plan was agreed to. In January the Johnson-

Goff mediation got under way. Valuation and security proved the two most difficult questions to settle. Late in April, after four months' continuous negotiation, complete agreement was announced. The settlement called for a "security grant" to be voted by the council, providing for the return of the property to the owners if the terms of the lease were violated. The Municipal Traction Company now began operating all the car lines of the city.

Wild rejoicing throughout Cleveland followed the announcement of traction peace. April 28 was proclaimed "Municipal Day" in celebration of the Johnson victory. No car fares were collected that day. Everybody rode deadhead. Some abused the privilege.

On the evening of the 28th the following statement was issued from City Hall:

With the successful completion of the long negotiations that have resulted in final and complete settlement of the street railway controversy, it is with great pleasure that we join in according recognition to Mr. Elbert H. Baker, general manager of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, for the important part played by him in the adjustment.

The plan by which the settlement was made possible was conceived by Mr. Baker. It was he who suggested that we act as mediators and it was through his efforts that the two of us undertook the negotiations.

At the outset Mr. Baker exerted tremendous influence in the interest of adjustment and throughout the negotiations his co-operation has been of the most vital importance.

We both feel that the community owes a vast debt to Mr. Baker and that in saying less we would fail of our duty.

Tom L. Johnson
F. H. Goff

Alas, this picture of peace and harmony was soon to fade. Many difficulties had been overcome, but the apparent victory was merely a mirage.

Three-cent fares were excellent as a slogan. As a battle-cry it had won one majority after another at the polls. But as an op-

erating principle on the streets of Cleveland it proved delusive.

To make three-cent fares pay, President A. B. du Pont of the Municipal Traction Company announced, economies in management must be adopted. Low fare will fail, said Johnson, unless unprofitable lines can be dropped. East Cleveland said it was treated unfairly and threatened an injunction. The *Plain Dealer* decried the "overbearing attitude toward the public" assumed by Municipal directors.⁸

The most serious obstacle encountered by the new traction management was the protest of the carmen's union against alleged discrimination. A strike was called, starting in mid-May. "Violence must be suppressed at all hazards," said the mayor. The *Plain Dealer* condemned the strike.⁹

Under a new law put through the legislature by friends of Johnson — the Schmidt Act — a referendum was called on the "security grant." The *Plain Dealer* vigorously supported the measure on the ground that it was a cornerstone of the April settlement. Mr. Goff told the Builders' Exchange that receivership of the traction properties would follow within ninety days if the grant were rejected.

The special referendum election was held October 22, 1908. The grant was defeated. Said the *Plain Dealer*: "The traction settlement, made amid general rejoicing last April, has been abandoned and the whole interminable problem again thrown open."¹⁰

A receivership for the Municipal Traction Company was ordered by Federal Judge Robert W. Tayler on November 11. Eleven days later the end of the strike was announced. By the close of the year it appeared that Johnson's dream of three-cent fares for Cleveland was a storm-leveled house of cards.

In a letter to the traction receivers on January 11, 1909, Judge Tayler outlined his ideas for a permanent settlement of the old

⁸ June 12, 1908.

⁹ May 17.

¹⁰ October 23, 1908.

controversy. Its basic principles, as he enunciated them, included guaranteed good service, six per cent dividends, and the lowest rate of fare compatible with those requirements. Johnson expressed a general approval of the suggested plan.

The situation again assumed a color of hopefulness when late in February a decision by Judge Knappen of Grand Rapids, sitting in the federal district court at Cleveland, confirmed Johnson's contention that franchises on the Woodland and West Side lines had expired more than a year before. The mayor was delighted. By the logic of Knappen's ruling, he foresaw that within a year or two three-cent franchises would cover most of the traction territory within the city.

He lost interest in the Tayler suggestion. He began to believe that, after all, he could win the old way.

June 1909 saw two acts by the city council calculated to prolong rather than end the wearisome controversy. The *Plain Dealer* condemned them both. The first was an ordinance authored by City Solicitor Newton D. Baker calling for an initial three-cent fare and a maximum of four cents.¹¹ The company would not, of course, accept these terms.

The second act of the council was the so-called Schmidt grant, authorizing the mayor's friend Herman J. Schmidt to build a street railroad on Payne Avenue.¹² By extensions thereof the builder might operate lines along many routes then held by the Cleveland Railway Company.¹³ The method was legal, but public sentiment had by now become set definitely away from further warfare, toward peace.

¹¹ Adopted June 4, 1909.

¹² June 7, 1909. Herman J. Schmidt is not to be confused with Thomas P. Schmidt, state senator who gave his name to the Schmidt Act, which authorized the referendum on the security grant.

¹³ The Cleveland Railway Co. had emerged as a new corporation from the settlement of 1908. It had taken over the traction properties of the Cleveland Electric Street Railroad Co. and of the Forest City Railway Co., owner of the low-fare lines. It had leased the combined systems to the Municipal Traction Co.

The Schmidt grant came to a popular referendum on August 3. The *Plain Dealer* fought it vigorously. "Not a few of those who have been the mayor's staunchest friends," it said, "have come now to doubt his sincerity, to question his good faith and to believe that he has no genuine desire to bring about a traction settlement."¹⁴

At the August election the Schmidt grant was defeated, and Mayor Johnson saw pass his last chance to give Cleveland what he had been working for since 1901. Three-cent fares were out. It was obvious that the long-deferred settlement must be made on some other basis.

Who first thought of the underlying principles of the so-called Tayler Plan would be difficult to determine. The idea probably occurred to several at about the same time. In October 1908 J. M. Shallenberger, former common pleas judge, in a letter to Elbert H. Baker had sketched the conditions of a grant which would secure for "Cleveland the most complete and efficient service at the lowest rate of fare that will insure a fair return." Identical in purpose was the scheme outlined by Judge Tayler himself in the following January. By June the *Plain Dealer* was discussing the merits of "the Tayler plan."¹⁵

Councilman Walz introduced a "Tayler ordinance."¹⁶ The council answered the suggestion by passing the Schmidt grant.

In May, before the adoption by council of either the Baker ordinance or the Schmidt grant, the *Plain Dealer* said:

The suggestion made in the traction conference yesterday that Judge Tayler be asked to pass upon the points of dispute between the city and the railway company is worthy of adoption. The only question concerns the judge's willingness to undertake the duty. If he is ready to assume the responsibility and to pass judgment upon the disputed issues the community will owe him a debt of gratitude even greater than it now acknowledges. . . .¹⁷

¹⁴ June 5.

¹⁵ June 7, for instance.

¹⁶ *Plain Dealer*, June 24.

¹⁷ May 22.

Johnson was then in no mood to accept the suggestion. He was much more inclined to accept it after the rejection of the Schmidt grant. He now faced another campaign for re-election. He had no reason for confidence that he could rally another popular majority to support a continuation of the old fight.

It was Baker of the *Plain Dealer* who first suggested Judge Tayler as a single mediator between council and company. The judge was reluctant. Until after the August referendum Johnson would show no interest.

Finally, early in October, a month before the mayoralty election, announcement was made that all parties had agreed. Tayler would act as mediator. The company would accept his findings. Johnson would sign an ordinance to embody whatever the judge might decide.

It was a second triumph for the *Plain Dealer's* general manager in his efforts to bring traction peace to Cleveland. It did not, however, save Mayor Johnson from the political defeat which unbiased observers had for months believed inevitable. Herman Baehr, the first Republican elected since 1897, became mayor.

The rest of the traction story is quickly told. Judge Tayler worked assiduously on the measure that bears his name. The Baker ordinance was used as the basis for negotiation. Valuation and the rates of fare remained the particular difficulties to be worked out. It was the opinion of observers that at least as much of Johnson as of Horace E. Andrews went into the finished product.¹⁸

On Saturday night, December 18, 1909, a tired council and a tired mayor gave their unanimous if unenthusiastic approval of the new ordinance. Commending Judge Tayler for carrying through a "real settlement," the *Plain Dealer* added: "Mayor Johnson has won, President Andrews has won, Cleveland has

¹⁸ Andrews as president of the Cleveland Electric Street Railroad Co. and then of the Cleveland Railway Co., had borne the brunt of the fight against Johnson traction policies.

won — and the ability and ingenuity of Judge Tayler have been the forces that have accomplished the seemingly impossible.”¹⁹

Some of the mayor's friends, dissatisfied with the terms of the agreement, demanded a referendum. The *Plain Dealer* saw no need for one. The council, however, ordered an election and set the date for February 17, 1910. It was generally supposed that Mayor Johnson favored the ordinance and would vote for it.

To the surprise of the community, however, five days before the election Johnson in a newspaper interview assailed the pending grant. Pathetically, he declared:

I am sick now, and tired; it has wearied me to prepare this statement. I may not be able to say anything more at present, but if it were the last heartbeat in me, I would urge the people of Cleveland — leaders, as they are, in the fight for democracy in this country — I would urge them to vote with their eyes open. This ordinance is not a victory. It is a defeat. . . .²⁰

The Tayler ordinance won at the election by a surprisingly large majority. Tom L. Johnson died fourteen months later.

¹⁹ December 20, 1909.

²⁰ *Cleveland Press*, February 12.

CHAPTER VI

A FATHER BECOMES A PROBLEM CHILD

After sixty-three years the Evening Plain Dealer disappears, abandoning the field where the Grays had so firmly anchored it. The Evening Post.

FOR forty-three years the *Evening Plain Dealer*, except for two or three abortive morning editions, constituted the whole *Plain Dealer* publishing enterprise. It was the father of the century-old *Plain Dealer* of today. But in the years following the establishment of the morning and Sunday papers, the evening edition became not so much a father as a problem child.

The prosperity that attended the morning and Sunday issues, after the demise of the *Herald*, did not spread into the afternoon. The *Cleveland Press* was making the big noise in the evening field. The *News and Herald*, though years younger than the *Evening Plain Dealer*, maintained a lead over its Democratic competitor which in the morning field the *Leader* finally struggled in vain to retain.

The fact seems to be that as soon as the morning and Sunday editions were firmly established and their future appeared reasonably certain, the attention of the *Plain Dealer* management switched gradually away from the evening field. It was a common observation that, except for the valuable afternoon franchise of the Associated Press, the *Evening Plain Dealer* would probably be dropped. The *Press* was supposedly ready to grab

for the franchise the moment it might become available.

In 1893, the year that Liberty E. Holden assumed personal direction of the editorial end of the *Plain Dealer*, a serious effort was made to make the evening edition something more than a weak echo of the morning paper. The directors voted on August 30 to change the name of the *Evening Plain Dealer* to the *Evening Post*. L. Dean Holden resigned as manager of advertising for the *Plain Dealer* and at the same meeting in October was elected business manager of the *Post*.

The purpose was to divorce the evening from the morning edition, give it a separate identity in the community, as far as possible, and thus build it up as a more effective competitor of the *News and Herald* and the *Press*. The first issue of the *Post* appeared on October 2, 1893.¹ It was to continue publication through 1896.

To emphasize the theory — abandoned after a few months — that the *Evening Post* was something more than an afternoon edition of the morning *Plain Dealer*, a new corporation was chartered, the *Post Publishing & Printing Company*. It was intended ultimately to give the *Post* publishing quarters apart from those of the *Plain Dealer*. The New York *Evening Post* was then in the midst of its days of greatest popularity. Its Cleveland namesake adopted the Old English first-page heading familiar to the admirers of Edwin L. Godkin.²

Further emphasis was given the thought of a separate identity by establishing an editorial page and an editorial policy

¹ The selling price of the *Post* was put at one cent, to meet the competition of the one-cent *Press*. The *News and Herald* sold for two cents. At the same time the morning *Plain Dealer* cut its price to two cents. The *Leader* was selling for three cents. By establishing the *Post*, the *Leader* said, October 5, 1893, that the *Plain Dealer* was "blotting out of existence the evening edition of that paper which was once the proud organ of the Democracy of Ohio."

² Godkin was editor-in-chief of the New York *Evening Post* from 1883 till 1899.

wholly independent of those of the *Plain Dealer*.³ At the beginning few editorials were used. Quotations from *Plain Dealer* editorials were meticulously credited to the morning paper.

The *Post* declared its own policy to be this:

The Evening Post aims to be strictly neutral in politics. It makes no pretensions to being even that anomaly of anomalies, an "independent" newspaper — an institution that exists only in the imagination. . . .⁴

In order that no doubt be entertained of its own political "neutrality," the *Post* established a department called "The Partisan Press," wherein day after day it reprinted political editorials in parallel columns, one Democratic and the other Republican. Occasionally an editorial from the *Plain Dealer* made its appearance in this partisan symposium.

All this high resolving, however, did not for long keep the *Post* free from partisan flavor. The Holdens were thorough Democrats. It was their money that kept the venture afloat. Business-office receipts did not indicate any great public appreciation of the younger Holden's effort to give Cleveland a "neutral" *Post* in place of a Democratic *Evening Plain Dealer*.

The *Post* Publishing & Printing Company disappeared. The *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company was by the middle of 1894 the acknowledged proprietor of the *Post*. L. Dean Holden's name as business manager came off the masthead. Those of L. E. Holden, president, and Charles E. Kennedy, general manager, went up in its place.

By now the editorial page of the *Post* each afternoon was identical with that of the *Plain Dealer* the same morning. Through the presidential campaign of 1896 the *Post* — the "neutral" of three years before — stoutly argued for Bryan and free silver.

³ This was an innovation in Cleveland. The *Leader* and its evening edition, the *News and Herald*, used identical editorial pages. The morning page was reproduced in the afternoon.

⁴ October 13, 1893.

It joined the morning *Plain Dealer* after the election in declaring the defeated Nebraskan the "idol" and "hero" of a repulsed but still militant political party.⁵

The pretense that the *Evening Post* was anything other than an afternoon edition of the *Plain Dealer* could scarcely be maintained — if anyone then wished to maintain it — after the campaign and the defeat of 1896. On the first day of the new year, 1897, the directors of the *Plain Dealer* voted "to consolidate the *Evening Post* with the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, issuing all daily morning and evening editions under the general title 'Cleveland Plain Dealer,' the evening edition to still contain in an incidental way the name *Evening Post*." L. Dean Holden was the only director to vote against this abandonment of the project he had sponsored a little more than three years before.⁶

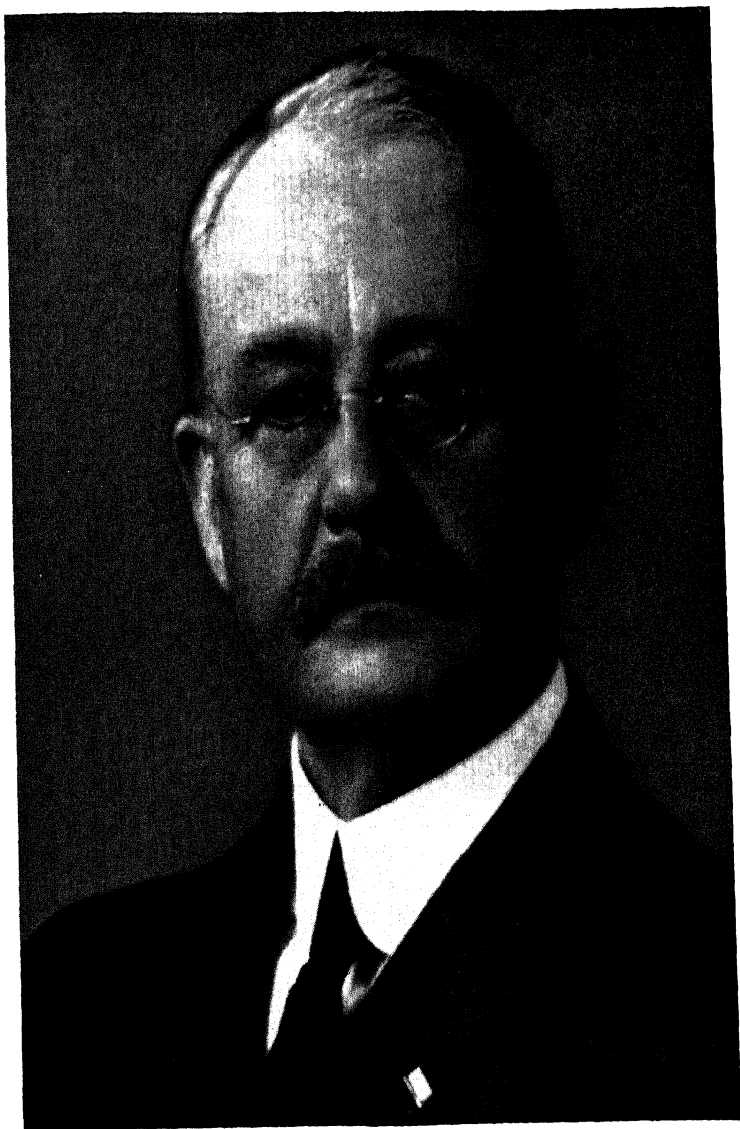
Whether a *Plain Dealer*-owned *Evening Post* could have been made a success, had the original plans been persisted in, it would be impossible to say. The *Leader*, first with its *News* and later with its *News and Herald*, made a success of the independent name. The *Plain Dealer* might, perhaps, have done as well.

Thus the autumn of Bryan's first defeat saw also the end of the *Evening Post* of Cleveland. The *Evening Plain Dealer* reappeared from its ashes. The name *Plain Dealer* had come back into the afternoon field where the Grays had first launched it fifty-five years before.

Unhappily, however, the evening paper had merely returned to its old status. It remained, as before, only a piping echo of the morning edition. It offered no effective competition to either the *Press* or the *News and Herald*.

⁵ This was the last time the *Plain Dealer* would support this particular "idol" for president. When he ran again in 1900 and 1908 the short-lived "neutrality" of the *Post* had complete possession of the editorial page.

⁶ Liberty Dean Holden, third son of Liberty Emery Holden, was given credit for inspiring the move to establish the *Post*. He had other business interests and later became manager of the Hotel Hollenden. He was born in Cleveland February 7, 1869; died February 14, 1906.



ELBERT HALL BAKER

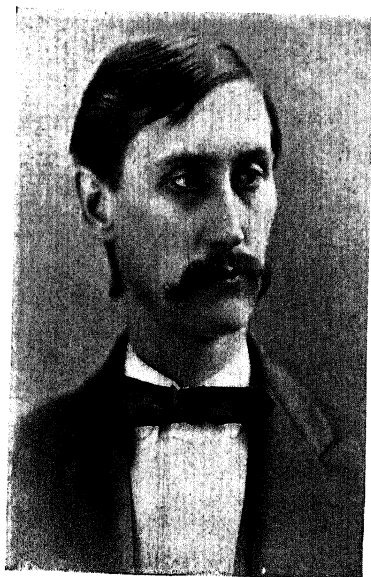
He inaugurated far-reaching policies which determined the character of the modern Plain Dealer.



GEORGE HOYT
1857-85



THOMAS A. STOW
1851-77



GILBERT W. HENDERSON
1880-89



NELSON S. COBLEIGH
1869-90

As late as the fall of 1900 the circulation of the *Evening Plain Dealer* was less than one third that of the Sunday edition and hardly more than a third that of the morning paper. It was obviously playing no great part in the life of its community.

The destiny apparently long in store for the *Evening Plain Dealer* finally overtook it in the summer of 1905, twenty years after the establishment of the morning and Sunday editions.⁷ The program for its disappearance was engineered by Charles A. Otis, Cleveland broker and business man.

Into the pot brewed by Otis went three Cleveland evening papers. Out of the pot, thanks to his brewing, emerged the *Cleveland News* as Cleveland knows it today.

The story is unusual. It affords an interesting chapter in the history of northern Ohio newspapers.

Mr. Otis first bought the *Cleveland World*. He then purchased the *Cleveland Leader* and the *News and Herald*. The *World* became the *World-News*. Shortly thereafter the *Evening Plain Dealer* was taken into the group. Soon the name *World* was dropped and the conglomerate afternoon paper, put together by Otis, became simply the *Cleveland News*.

Politics played a part in the three-way merger, though it cannot be said that politics inspired it. Tom L. Johnson was in the heyday of his power in Cleveland. Charles A. Otis, a Republican and a Cleveland Electric Street Railroad stockholder and director, believed that the policies of the mayor, particularly in relation to local transportation, were inimical to the interests of the city. He saw threatened with destruction the work of pioneer citizens of Cleveland who had built a great street railway system as part of their contribution to the prosperity of their community.

The *Plain Dealer* and the *Press* were supporting Johnson. The *Leader* and the *News and Herald* were opposing him.

The *Cleveland World*, evening and Sunday, had barely sur-

⁷ The last issue of the *Evening Plain Dealer* was published on July 15, 1905.

vived the tribulations of recent years and was ready for a purchaser. Springing from the *Sunday World*, the evening edition had made its appearance in 1889. The enterprise had gone through a receivership in 1896.

Otis organized the Meridian Printing Company with an authorized capital of \$300,000, and through its agency bought the *World* from John H. Blood, its chief owner. Blood became a director of the corporation. B. F. Bower had been president and treasurer of the *World* Company, and was editor and general manager of the *World* when Otis stepped in.⁸ Frederick C. Beyer was city editor.⁹

One of the new owner's first moves was to drop the *Sunday World* as profitless. One of his first discoveries was that the *Evening World* had no adequate news service. It needed something like the Associated Press.

The *Cleveland Leader* was by now outstripped by the *Plain Dealer*. The *Leader's* afternoon edition, the *News and Herald*, was by comparison with the competitors in its own field in better condition than its parent. If Otis could get the *News and Herald* he would procure a membership in the Associated Press and thus give the *World* a service it greatly needed.

Had Otis been able to secure the *News and Herald* without the *Leader* it is probable that he would have done so. This being impossible, he bought both the old Cowles papers.¹⁰

The shadow of the militant *Press* stood across the afternoon newspaper field. Otis, now well into his new career as a newspaper publisher, could see no reason why the advertising reve-

⁸ B. F. Bower and George A. Robertson bought the *World* in 1889 and in 1895 sold it to Robert P. Porter. Following their sale of the *World* Bower and Robertson established the *Cleveland Recorder*, morning and evening, which, after a brief career, was sold to the *Plain Dealer*.

⁹ Frederick C. Beyer, born in Wayland, New York, came to Cleveland in 1880 and from that time till 1904 was connected with the *Leader*, rising to the position of managing editor. From 1904 till 1912 he was city editor of the *News*. He died October 2, 1939.

¹⁰ The last issue of the *News and Herald* was dated June 10, 1905.

nue which escaped the grasp of the Scripps-McRae paper should be divided between two other afternoon papers, the *News* and the *Plain Dealer*. He approached the owners of the *Plain Dealer* with a view to its elimination.

The Holden group was receptive to the idea. By now Albert F. Holden, the eldest son, had come into some measure of leadership. He was vice president of the *Plain Dealer* corporation. Speaking for his father and the rest, "Bert" Holden conducted the negotiations with Otis.

On July 21, 1905 the directors of the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company authorized the sale of the evening paper to the Meridian Printing Company, taking in payment therefor \$250,000 in bonds of the latter corporation. In the memorandum of agreement between the two parties appears this item:

That it is to their common interest that the newspaper business of the city of Cleveland and vicinity will be best conserved by having two morning papers of opposite politics and two evening papers to be independent in every respect in the management and publication from the morning papers, and that neither morning paper shall publish an evening edition, and the two evening papers shall publish no Sunday paper.

It had been a process of simplification. The situation in the evening newspaper field had now been "cleaned up." There were now two English-language afternoon papers where there had been four. From the point of view of an opponent of Tom L. Johnson and his transportation policies, there were now one pro-Johnson and one anti-Johnson paper in the evening field, where there had been, after the absorption of the *News and Herald*, two supporting the mayor to one in opposition.

Having achieved the result he had in mind so far as the situation in the afternoon newspaper field was concerned, Otis had no wish to continue indefinitely as a publisher. He had other interests demanding his attention. They were more to his taste than was the operation of a couple of newspaper plants. The stage was set for a newcomer.

Medill McCormick, part owner of the *Chicago Tribune*, had married Ruth Hanna, daughter of the Cleveland Senator, and had his eye on the Cleveland newspaper field. His grandfather, Joseph Medill, had gone from the *Cleveland Leader* to rebuild the *Chicago Tribune* and start it on the way to a phenomenal success. The grandson sought to reverse the process, returning from the *Tribune* to the *Leader*.

Accordingly, Otis sold to McCormick a half-interest in the *Leader* and the *News*. By agreement between them, Otis continued to direct the *News* while McCormick took personal control of the *Leader*. The new director and half-owner of the *Leader* made strenuous efforts to bring the paper back to something of its former glory, but in the end had to confess that the momentum by that time attained by the *Plain Dealer* was too great to overcome.

The McCormick interest was then taken over by Dan R. Hanna, son of the Senator and brother-in-law of the Chicagoan. In the process of the transfer Hanna became outright owner of the *Leader* and Otis of the *News*. The new ownership of the *Leader* became effective in the fall of 1910.

As the national campaign of 1912 approached, Hanna leaned heavily toward Theodore Roosevelt and the Bull Moose cause. Under the circumstances, the *Leader* was certain to support the insurgent against the Republican President seeking re-election.¹¹

Otis, as owner of the *News*, could not agree that the welfare of the country or, selfishly, that of the Republicans themselves called for the ditching of the old party and the defeat of President Taft. It would have seemed a bit incongruous for these partners of many years — the *Leader* and the *News* — to go through the coming crucial campaign on opposite sides of the partisan fence.

¹¹ The day after Theodore Roosevelt was nominated for president by the Progressive convention at Chicago the *Leader* declared its support of him — “the first citizen of his generation.” The *News* remained neutral as between Taft and Roosevelt.

It was a friendly disagreement between the two newspaper owners, but in a sense a serious one. Otis and Hanna had been intimate personal friends and associates for years. They found no difficulty, therefore, in resolving the situation in a business-like way.

Hanna bought the *News* of Otis in 1912. He erected the present *Leader* Building to house his two papers. In 1917 he sold the daily morning *Leader* to the *Plain Dealer*, retaining the Sunday *Leader*, linking it with the *News* and calling it the *News-Leader*. In 1925 the name *Leader* and the hyphen were dropped. In 1926 the present *News* Building was occupied. In 1933 the *Plain Dealer* bought the Sunday *News*.

The *Plain Dealer* had now become Cleveland's only morning and Sunday paper. A situation long in the making had finally matured.

CHAPTER VII

FIRE AND A NEW SITE

The Plain Dealer, a leader in the move to establish the Group Plan, settles down at a corner of it. Now occupies its tenth home in the heart of Cleveland.

FIREs have destroyed cities, only to have greater, more beautiful cities rise from the ruins. Fire destroyed the *Plain Dealer* Building in the winter of 1908, clearing the way for the modern newspaper plant of today.

When the *Plain Dealer* moved to what is now Superior Avenue and East 6th Street it completed its ninth migration in the fifty-four years since the Grays started publication in the *Cleveland Advertiser's* old quarters above the Postoffice at 37 Superior Street. A growing paper in a growing community, it was ever under the necessity of finding larger space and more convenient facilities for publication.

When the Grays at the beginning of 1842 bought the usable assets of the *Advertiser* it seemed the logical step to take over also the *Advertiser's* shop and sanctum. By the end of March, however, less than three months later, the *Plain Dealer* announced that it had moved to quarters "above Dr. W. A. Clark's drug store, a few doors below the Franklin, on Main street."¹ At the same time announcement was made that the publication

¹ March 30. Superior was then sometimes called Main Street.

of the paper was now united with the job printing establishment hitherto belonging to Penniman & Bemis.²

The establishment of the evening daily in 1845 called for additional equipment, and the *Plain Dealer* went to the Merchants' Exchange Building, opposite the Weddell House. Here it became a co-tenant with the *Cleveland Herald* and was able to make use of the steam power recently made available for presses by M. C. Younglove & Company. Two years later this arrangement was abandoned, and in 1847 J. W. Gray moved his plant to quarters at 17 Superior Street above A. S. Sanford's bookstore.³ After Gray's death it was Sanford, as administrator of the estate, who sold the *Plain Dealer* to W. W. Armstrong.

In 1851 Gray bought and occupied the recently completed Arcade Building at the corner of Superior and Vineyard Streets, opposite the end of Water (now West 9th) Street. The building was immediately given the name of the paper, and there its publication was continued through the remaining eleven years of Gray's life and the stormy administration of Stephenson. The building became a center of Democratic party activities under three publishers, for Armstrong, buying the paper in 1865, retained the old quarters until 1869.

In the same year that the *Plain Dealer* moved to this, the first building it had owned, the *Herald* went to the magnificent, stone-front structure on Bank (now West 6th) Street, which had been erected by Josiah A. Harris, one of its proprietors. The *Herald* occupied this building till 1885, when the *Plain Dealer* took possession.

When in 1869 Armstrong took his paper from the Vineyard Street corner to 107 Bank Street the old building was sold to

² Job printing remained a part of the *Plain Dealer* enterprise until the fire of 1908.

³ Announcement of the move was made on October 12, but the actual migration did not occur till December. "The Plain Dealer building . . . is the name of the new Brick Block just opened on Superior street three doors below the Franklin House. . . . It is a very fine superstructure of three stories and has a large cellar and attic," the paper announced.

James Brokenshire, who had been in the business office of the paper under Gray. He in turn sold it to the Bratenahl Brothers, dealers in leather, who razed the old structure and on the site erected a new one which long bore their name.⁴

From 107 Bank Street to 107 Seneca Street the *Plain Dealer* next took its way. This was to the Drum Block and the migration occurred in 1874. Here the paper lived through some of its most exciting days. It was this home of the *Plain Dealer* that the belligerent hosts of Democracy stormed in glad acclaim in November 1876 when it was supposed Tilden had been elected president of the United States. They returned eight years later when the returns showed indubitably that Grover Cleveland had been chosen the first Democrat since the Civil War to sit in the White House.

The *Plain Dealer* made its next move in the same month that Cleveland took the oath of office. The *Herald* suspended publication, its physical assets being taken by the Democratic evening paper, then recently bought by Liberty E. Holden and associates. Thus the *Plain Dealer* in March 1885 moved into the building on Bank Street which the *Herald* had moved into on its completion in 1851.

Four years later, with the morning and Sunday *Plain Dealer* now in full flower, more space again became imperative, and at the end of May the paper pulled up stakes to move a short distance north to the southeast corner of Bank and Frankfort Streets. Here for the first time the operations of the paper were lighted by electricity, the new illuminant being manufactured by the paper itself. That the migration from the old *Herald* building was not without its humorous aspects is indicated by an editorial on the occasion:

Old friends were left behind in bewilderment and despair — rats grown gray and wise in continual association with human intelligence and ingenuity, and cockroaches whose courteous hospitality

⁴ From these Bratenahls the village on the lake shore east of Cleveland took its name.

permitted editors and reporters to occasionally use the desks which the roaches had inherited as homes through successive generations. These old friends will be missed but not for long. As the exodus went on, inquisitive rodents and interested roaches watched the departure and noted the direction the procession took. The distance is not great and when the rats and roaches grow weary of the solitude and long for human companionship they, too, will take up the line of march northward and drop in upon their old chums with a familiar "howdy." . . .

The last decade of the century saw an acceleration of Cleveland's march of business eastward beyond the Public Square. In May 1896 the *Plain Dealer* joined the procession and on the first day of June the *Plain Dealer* and the *Evening Post* were issued for the first time from the new address at Superior Street (now Avenue) and Bond Street (since named East 6th).⁵ There were two buildings on this site, one on the Superior and the other on the Rockwell Street end of the property. The former was adapted to house the editorial and business activities and the latter the mechanical plant, including a thriving job-printing establishment. The *Plain Dealer* would shortly erect a small building between and connecting the two.

On this site, enlarged as business expansion required, the *Plain Dealer* has remained these forty-six years since 1896. Here much of the history of the paper has been made. In the century of publication the *Plain Dealer* has been printed from ten different locations, an average of one per decade. By comparison the present site may thus be called "permanent."

This property was owned by John Hay and his wife, Clara Stone Hay. Liberty E. Holden had taken a lease on the land and buildings, and this lease he later sold to the *Plain Dealer*

⁵ When the *Plain Dealer* was preparing to abandon the site at the Bank and Franfort corner, a considerable group in the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce favored that location for the new building the chamber was about to erect. The decision finally, however, was to build at the northeast corner of the Public Square. The structure now occupied by Cleveland College was the result of that decision. Kinney & Levan, retail merchants, took the space vacated by the *Plain Dealer*.

Publishing Company for \$100,000, payment being made in preferred stock in the corporation. The lease contained the usual option to buy the property, and in January 1901 the directors voted to take title to it. It was the second time in the fifty-nine years of its existence that the paper actually owned the real estate from which it was published.

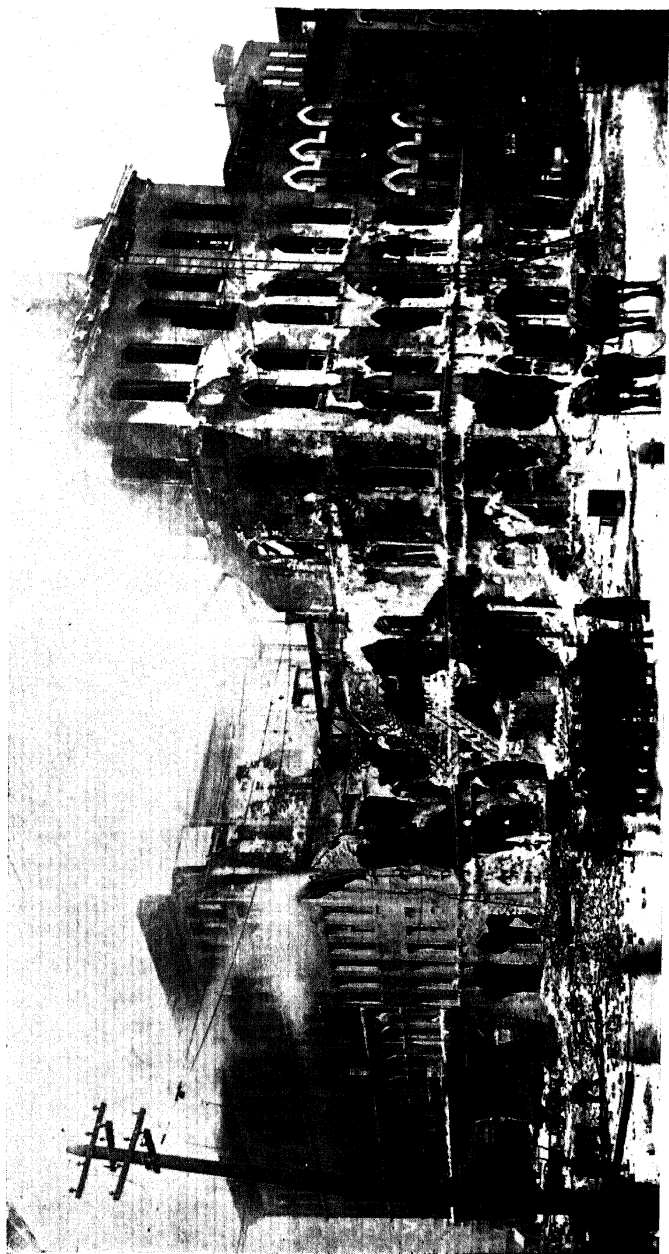
The paper was now comfortably housed, though no part of the plant had been built for newspaper use. There were inconveniences, and architecturally the paper's home left much to be desired. The latter fact was particularly impressive, since a Mall and a Group Plan were being talked of to occupy space immediately adjoining. Besides, the institution was already outgrowing its space.

Fire on the bitterly cold morning of February 2, 1908 helped answer questions which would soon have pressed on the management. Caused presumably by defective wiring in the mailing-room, it gutted the mechanical end of the *Plain Dealer* plant. Twenty-two linotype machines and other valuable equipment on the top floor and the job-printing plant on a lower floor were dropped in ruins into the basement. The presses, however, were but little damaged, precautions having been taken against just such an emergency as this. What injury they suffered was from water. But the Rockwell end of the establishment was beyond any possibility of restoration, and the front part was left without essential conveniences.

Immediate offers came from the *Leader*, the *News*, and the *Press* of their complete equipment for the *Plain Dealer's* temporary use. The invitation of the *News* was accepted and from its plant on lower Ontario Street the publication of the *Plain Dealer* was continued uninterruptedly until its own temporary plant could be assembled.

The *News* thus returned the favor which the *Plain Dealer* had done the predecessor of the *News*, the *Cleveland World*, when the plant of the latter was destroyed by fire in 1895.

Until February 24 the *Plain Dealer* used the *News* presses and



THE FIRE OF 1908

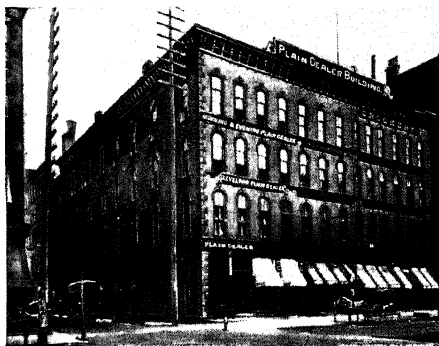
Early on a February morning in zero weather it burned the Plain Dealer out of its home,



Occupied 1847-51



1874-85



1889-96



Covered part of site of present Plain Dealer Building. Razed after the fire of 1908.

THE PLAIN DEALER IN ITS HUNDRED YEARS HAS BEEN HOUSED IN ELEVEN BUILDINGS. HERE ARE FOUR OF THEM

other equipment. By that time temporary quarters had been established in the abandoned livery stable of the Hotel Hollenden on Superior Street adjacent to the hotel itself.

Into these cramped quarters moved the editorial department. In them was set up a battery of new linotype machines. Here new steam tables were put in operation, making the matrices, which were sent across the street to the stereotype machines and the presses operating in the basement of the burned structure.

Except for the business activities of the paper, which continued in the old front building, and the presses and the making of stereotype plates in the old basement, most of the operations of the paper, morning and Sunday, continued in these depressing surroundings until the summer of 1909. Workers, loyal to their paper, took the experience as part of life. There was no deterioration in the quality of the publication.

Meanwhile, the destroyed rear portion of the old establishment had been replaced by a structure of granite, steel, and concrete. Into it on August 1 moved the remainder of the mechanical operations, and the news department. Though work on the front half of the new building went forward at once as soon as the ground could be cleared, not until November 25, 1911 was the Superior end completed and ready for occupancy. Thereupon the last of the migrants from the old livery stable trekked across the street to offices which smelled of varnish and to desks as yet unscarred by heel or splotch of ink. On this Saturday before Thanksgiving, two years and nine months after the fire, the *Plain Dealer* held open house in celebration of the completion of its new home. Hundreds of people came to tour the building and to admire the great counting-room in Italian marble, bronze, and mahogany.

From typewriters clicking between walls which formerly echoed to the stamp of horses' hoofs had come the editorials which helped bring a peaceful ending to the ten-year traction war, tried to save the security grant against a hostile popular

majority, helped defeat the Schmidt franchise, and attempted without success to persuade the voters of Cleveland to give Tom Johnson a fifth term at City Hall. The city editor and his staff, compressed into quarters wholly inadequate, covered the Collinwood school disaster, one of the great local news stories of all time in Cleveland.

The present *Plain Dealer* Building, as the community knows it, conspicuous in the heart of Cleveland, was erected in three sections. First came the part at the corner of Rockwell Avenue and East 6th Street which covers the site of the old structure destroyed by fire. Then came the section at the Superior Avenue corner, completing the frontage along East 6th Street. Even now, however, it was realized that the anticipated growth of the enterprise would in a few years require more space than this completed new building afforded.

Accordingly, land was bought in several parcels west of the building, the structures occupying them were razed, and in 1921 work was begun on the addition which would practically double the size of the *Plain Dealer* Building.

The fire in 1908 precipitated the issue as to whether the company should remain on the old site or move to some cheaper if not more convenient place. It was decided, first, to remain. If the paper were to remain, however, it was obvious that the new building must harmonize with the structures already beginning to take form along the Mall. This would be relatively costly construction, but the management and owners were willing to stand the additional expense in order to give the *Plain Dealer* a home in architectural harmony with its neighbors.

Elbert H. Baker, general manager, held many conferences with architects and others interested in maintaining the dignity of the Group Plan. The design finally worked out met the full approval of everyone concerned. In Baker's words, it harmonizes but does not compete with the monumental public buildings which carry out the spirit of the Group on the Mall.

The *Leader* in one of its petulant moments charged the *Plain*

Dealer with "having 'butted' into Cleveland's Group Plan with a newspaper manufacturing plant located on a corner where everyone expected an open park to be established. . . ." ⁶ Whatever resentment existed because of the *Plain Dealer's* decision to continue to make this corner its home was apparently confined to the editorial office of the competing morning paper.

The *Plain Dealer*, conscious of its responsibilities to the community which helped it to prosper, is proud of its location in the heart of Cleveland and has never felt an apology was due because its building adjoins a corner of the Group Plan.

Thus the paper which early espoused the Mall proposal, whose general manager was in no small measure responsible for enlisting the powerful influence of Tom L. Johnson in its promotion, found itself by 1922, on completion of the west half of the building, practically a part of the Group Plan. The disaster of fire had helped weave the pattern of achievement.

⁶ November 6, 1909. It is true, of course, that in the first designs adopted for the Mall and Group Plan, the ground now occupied by the *Plain Dealer* Building was scheduled for park purposes. How far, if at all, the presence of this building detracts from the beauty of the civic center must be left for others to answer. The time when the paper's decision was made to remain on the old site was close upon what the City Plan Commission later called "the most discouraging period in the history of this [the Group] plan." Events were moving very slowly toward the consummation of a great civic achievement.

CHAPTER VIII

SPOKESMAN FOR LIBERALISM

By its support of the constitution in 1912 the Plain Dealer wins fresh recognition as an organ of progressive opinion. Other policies.

THE FIRST decade of the twentieth century saw a sharpening division of sentiment in the United States on political and economic questions touching the well-being of the common man. Liberalism, though difficult to define precisely, became a force to be reckoned with at the polls and in legislative bodies. In this decade the term was coming to mean a philosophy, understandable even if not always quite definable.

Woodrow Wilson, Governor of New Jersey, gave voice to it in his "New Freedom,"¹ which he defined as "an attempt to express the new spirit of our politics and to set forth in large terms which may stick in the imagination what it is that must be done, if we are to restore our politics to their full spiritual vigor again and our national life . . . to its purity, its self-respect and its pristine strength and freedom."

Newton D. Baker was spokesman for the faith in Cleveland, carrying on in the spirit of Tom L. Johnson after the latter's

¹ *The New Freedom* was the title of the book edited by William Bayard Hale which included some of "the more suggestive portions" of Wilson's speeches. Wilson himself wrote the preface, including the definition quoted in the text above.

retirement from public life. Brand Whitlock in Toledo personified the same trend of thought. East and west men were enlisting in the war against privilege and piratical complacency.

Being itself for years the under-dog in the local competitive newspaper field, the *Plain Dealer* naturally sympathized with every man who found himself an under-dog in the economic struggle. It voiced the aspiration of common men for a larger share in the good things of life. It challenged the right of the economically powerful to dictate to the underprivileged.

When, therefore, near the beginning of the new century the lines began to form for the battle for liberalism, there was but one place for the *Plain Dealer*. That was on the side of the Wilsons, the Bakers, and the Whitlocks, then striving to widen the economic horizons of millions of men.

The issue came to every voter in Ohio in the spring and summer of 1912 when a constitutional convention, whose delegates had been elected in a surge of liberal sentiment, submitted to popular vote a new basic law for the state. It was the first thorough overhauling the constitution had had in more than half a century. Obviously here was an opportunity to provide fresh and becoming political garments for one of the older commonwealths not theretofore much given to experimentation in governmental forms.

The convention adopted the unusual device of submitting the new constitution in forty-two distinct amendments, giving the electorate the opportunity of passing judgment on each of them, adopting or rejecting them individually as it chose. It was recognized that if the amendments were adopted — or even the more important of them — the changes they would bring about in the fundamental law of the state would mean the most pronounced step which had been taken by any state in the Union, not even excepting those on the Pacific coast and some of the newer states like Oklahoma and Arizona, which in their first constitutions had incorporated many new ideas in government not yet generally accepted.

As unusual as the method of the convention in submitting the new constitution was the plan of the *Plain Dealer* in laying the proposal before the voters of the state. In a series of leading editorials running through most of the summer — the election was on September 3 — the paper discussed one amendment after another separately and, except in one instance, told why it believed the particular proposal should be adopted or rejected.

The *Plain Dealer* was the only newspaper in the state to follow this policy of complete candor with its readers.² As day after day the paper put its stamp of approval on one far-reaching innovation after another, some in the community expressed a quite unjustified surprise. Cleveland and the state as a whole accepted the fact as fresh evidence that the *Plain Dealer* was in truth acting the part of a spokesman for liberal opinion.

Of the forty-two amendments the *Plain Dealer* recommended thirty-seven for adoption and avoided a commitment on one which would have enfranchised the women of the state.³ The voters in the September election approved thirty-four and rejected eight, including the suffrage proposal.

Among the moot amendments which the *Plain Dealer* argued for and saw adopted was one establishing the initiative and referendum, one setting up state-wide primaries, workmen's compensation, a liberalized recall to include judges, and one giving the lethal dose to prison contract labor. Among the most important was the amendment granting political home rule to the cities of the state.

This was the summer which saw Woodrow Wilson campaigning for the presidency against a Republican Party split by Theodore Roosevelt. Liberal Democrats had rallied to Wilson's support in the Baltimore convention. Judson Harmon, Governor of

² The *Press* gave a blanket endorsement to all the amendments. The *Leader* recommended a few, including that for woman suffrage. It afterward hailed the election as a "great day's work."

³ A few years later the *Plain Dealer* became an ardent advocate of woman suffrage. In 1912 it could at least claim that in opposing it for Ohio, it spoke for an overwhelming popular majority.

Ohio, had been a candidate for the presidential nomination, but when he went before an early session of the constitutional convention and denounced the initiative and referendum as a dangerous doctrine, he alienated the liberal Democrats of the state and made his own nomination at Baltimore impossible.

The *Plain Dealer* gave him no support for the presidency, though it had been his consistent supporter as governor. Newton D. Baker took the fight for Wilson to the floor of the national convention and was largely instrumental in breaking the "unit rule" which bound the Buckeye Democrats to Harmon's support. For the first time since 1896 the *Plain Dealer* supported a nominee for president. The liberalism of Wilson appealed strongly to the morning liberal organ of northern Ohio.

Cleveland, under Baker's leadership, was first among Ohio cities to take advantage of the home-rule provision of the new constitution. The city charter was adopted in 1913, with the active support of the *Plain Dealer*.

In pursuance of its policy of complete candor in its handling of public issues, the *Plain Dealer* inaugurated the practice in each state or local campaign of recommending candidates for election, after they had been nominated in party primaries. It was the first paper in Ohio, if not in the country, to render this service regularly to its readers. The practice began in a limited way in 1908. By 1912 it was a settled *Plain Dealer* policy and has been followed unswervingly ever since.

The argument sustaining it is that, inasmuch as each voter is expected to make enlightened choices in the election booths, there can be no excuse for a newspaper to evade these decisions, since it has far greater opportunities than he for ascertaining facts. That these *Plain Dealer* recommendations are widely appreciated as a public service is indicated by the pressure brought to bear by candidates at each election to win the paper's endorsement. Nominees who desire but are refused the favor of a recommendation often decry its importance. Their attitude is strongly tinctured with the flavor of sour grapes.

Other papers came in time to follow the example of the *Plain Dealer* in the endorsement of candidates and issues. The *Plain Dealer* novelty of thirty or more years ago is now in Ohio a commonplace practice.

"Liberalism," says Harold Stearns, in *Liberalism in America*, is "willing to face opposite views; it welcomes them."

In the early days of Elbert H. Baker's management of the paper, the *Plain Dealer* may have been chargeable with over-caution in its handling of many public questions. It was engaged in building goodwill and naturally sought to make as few enemies as possible. Unhappily it gained for itself in this period a local reputation for being often insipid. Too many editorials ended with some neutralizing observation; perhaps with a brief paragraph beginning: "On the other hand, however. . . ."

An office tradition preserves the comment of the late Percy Knight, then chief editorial writer, when Baker announced in 1904 an intention to fight for granite as the building material for the Federal Building on the Mall. "Thank God," said Knight, "this is the end of our hat-in-hand policy!"⁴

Local business interests wanted sandstone, a local product. Labor demanded sandstone. The *Plain Dealer* argued that, inasmuch as this building was the first to go into the Group Plan, the material used in its construction would set a pattern for the great structures to follow. After a bitter fight in Cleveland and in Washington, granite won. The pattern it set has been followed only in part, however. Considerations of cost have wrestled with æsthetic considerations and sometimes won.

The *Plain Dealer* gave its support to zoning when spokesmen for business and industry challenged its legality and denounced its evil purpose.

From the day before the Fourth in July 1908, when a fire-works fire in a Cleveland ten-cent store cost seven lives, the

⁴ Percy Knight was born at Norfolk, Virginia, in 1866. A graduate of Bowdoin College, he came to the *Plain Dealer* in 1888. He died in Cleveland February 6, 1908.

Plain Dealer was a constant advocate of legislation to relieve Independence Day of its deadly peril. Murder and suicide in the name of patriotism were crimes the more detestable because so readily preventable. Cleveland became the first big city to celebrate a Sane Fourth. When it was seen that local legislation was inadequate to curb the sadistic Fourth, the *Plain Dealer* turned its attention to the legislature and in session after session saw its proposals for state-wide control of the evil shelved at the behest of hostile lobbyists. Not until the winter of 1941 was an adequate law enacted.

Against the protests of the leaders of both parties, the *Plain Dealer* supported the city-manager plan and helped make Cleveland the largest city in America to have its non-political affairs administered by one chosen outside of politics. It resisted abandonment of the plan, even after politicians had warped it to their uses, and has since many times argued that ultimately the demand for good government will call the manager plan back to City Hall.

The *Plain Dealer* almost from the beginning of its existence a hundred years ago has continually advocated the annexation of suburbs as fast as they appeared ready for full partnership with the parent city. Seventeen years ago, realizing the difficulty of persuading prosperous suburbs to give up their separate identity, the paper began urging the adoption of a borough plan which would permit the outlying communities to retain a large measure of their independence while still co-operating with Cleveland to make it a greater, bigger, stronger city.⁵ It cannot be said that this advocacy has as yet been fruitful, but the principle behind it stands sharp analysis.

Not long after the appearance of the morning *Plain Dealer* in 1885 it began a ceaseless demand for the construction of a municipal auditorium conveniently located and large enough to accommodate the largest possible civic events. The present Public Hall on the east side of the Mall, its first major unit com-

⁵ Editorial, May 15, 1925.

pleted twenty years ago, came in answer to such agitation pressed in season and out.

Cuyahoga River improvement and lake front development have been twin enterprises urged by the *Plain Dealer* for many years as contributions to the greater glory of industrial Cleveland. And to the *Plain Dealer* a developed lake front means a lake front made available to commerce, not a lake front devoted exclusively or primarily to recreation.

In harmony with this vision of a city made greater by increasing its water transportation facilities, the *Plain Dealer* was the first newspaper on Lake Erie to advocate construction of the St. Lawrence Waterway.

Because it believes in the vast importance of lake commerce the *Plain Dealer* was among the first to combat Chicago's proposal to divert practically unlimited quantities of water from Lake Michigan down the barge canal to the Mississippi. In later years its interest in maintaining the water levels of the lakes, jeopardized by the Chicago program, has been increased by the conviction that, despite formidable hostility, the St. Lawrence Waterway will some day become a reality.

Although the paper has for years resisted every proposal to put Cleveland directly in the street railway business, it gave its support from the start to the Municipal Light Plant. It opposed Tom L. Johnson on the issue of municipal ownership of transportation lines, while supporting him on most major questions. It has argued that street-car transportation is a natural monopoly, wherein the maximum benefit is derived from the largest feasible measure of public control, whereas the making and distribution of electricity lends itself to competitive methods. The story of light and power rates in Cleveland since Tom L. Johnson first put the city into the business seems to sustain the thesis that in this field healthful competition carries the best assurance of public benefit.

Critics have tried to persuade the *Plain Dealer* that its advocacy of an appointive state and local judiciary is out of har-

mony with its adherence to liberalism. The paper has remained unconvinced. It sees the rights of the underprivileged endangered, not strengthened, by the present rule which almost compels a candidate for judge, whether running for re-election or making his first bid for votes, to run the gantlet of selfish politics and to commit himself in advance to points of view which undermine his larger usefulness on the bench. It is no more illiberal to ask that judges be appointed than it is to insist on the short ballot; than it was a generation ago to kick against the fee system in public offices, as the *Plain Dealer* did.

In the wider field of national politics the paper stoutly advocated American membership in the League of Nations and American adherence to the World Court. Had the majority sustained this argument, instead of sending Warren G. Harding to the White House with a vote thereafter interpreted as a rejection of the Versailles Treaty, it is hardly to be questioned that the international picture in the summer and fall of 1941 would have been quite different from what it was.

As the second World War got under way the *Plain Dealer* was the first big newspaper in the country to insist that America's place was beside Great Britain, if democracy is to be saved, and to urge full co-operation with the Churchill government. By the summer of 1940 it saw the American way of life imperiled by the Nazi swing across Europe.

Under Gray the position of the *Plain Dealer* on the tariff issue was not always consistent.⁶ In 1843 the paper advocated a tariff for revenue.⁷ Three years later it hailed the "glorious era" of free trade as having then commenced.⁸

By 1883 the *Plain Dealer* was declaring that "free trade is an impossibility in any country, and in this country it is absurd to

⁶ A curious policy of the early Gray days urged the federal government to abolish the postoffices and custom houses, leaving these activities to private enterprise. See editorials of Septembr 16, 1850 and March 29, 1859.

⁷ July 26.

⁸ August 4, 1846.

think about it.”⁹ But the editor who wrote in 1893 that “the Plain Dealer has never advocated free trade” was unfamiliar with his own background.¹⁰

Liberty E. Holden was a tariff-for-revenue Democrat, and after he assumed control of the paper its course was consistent with that traditional party policy. It criticized Tom L. Johnson in Congress for his advocacy of free trade.¹¹ It opposed the Wilson tariff bill on the ground that it was in essence a free-trade measure.

To the income tax proposal under discussion in Congress in 1894 the *Plain Dealer* objected only because it exempted incomes of \$4,000 and below; whereas the paper believed the exemption should begin at \$800 or \$1,000. “It is not wise,” it said, “to build up a patrician class in this country.”

After the first Bryan campaign the *Plain Dealer* never again advocated any but the soundest policies relative to banking and currency. It supported the legislation which established the Federal Reserve banking system and in later years resisted every proposal to undermine its effectiveness.

The *Plain Dealer* did not advocate national prohibition or the adoption of the late Eighteenth Amendment. After the amendment became part of the Constitution and legislation was adopted to implement it, the issue became — so far as the paper was concerned — one of law enforcement, and hence entitled to support as long as the amendment stood. It argued for strict obedience to, and strict enforcement of, the prohibition legislation.

Not until it became evident to the *Plain Dealer* that enforcement was impossible, because public opinion was definitely against it, did the paper join those demanding that the amendment be repealed.

⁹ January 1.

¹⁰ September 23.

¹¹ January 12, 1894.

CHAPTER IX

DAVID AND GOLIATH

The steadily climbing Plain Dealer finally topples its great rival when the Cleveland Leader succumbs. The great circulation war.

THE CLASSIC narrative of David and Goliath was re-enacted with a modern stage-setting when the *Plain Dealer* for years warred on the *Cleveland Leader* and finally, in August 1917, laid its doughty old enemy in the grave.

Had J. W. Gray in the last years of his life been asked to name his fondest wish he would probably have specified the humbling of Edwin Cowles and his *Leader*, which then and for years afterward overshadowed the local newspaper field. Had W. W. Armstrong been given the fulfillment of one fond dream, he would have named the same achievement. He would have looked on the defeat of the *Leader* as the maximum blessing any *Plain Dealer* man could ask.

This feeling, which had become traditional long before the end of the century, was inherited by Liberty E. Holden and his associates who came into control of the *Plain Dealer* in the same year the *Herald* bowed itself out of the picture. The victory, when it came at last, was brought about through the master management of Elbert H. Baker after the titular three founders of the *Plain Dealer*, Gray, Armstrong, and Holden, were in their graves.

The *Plain Dealer* from its earliest days was accustomed to the

hostility of numerous competitors. It was fought by the *Herald* for more than forty years. The *Times*, the *National Democrat*, and the *Globe* — all of them Democratic — warred against it. The *True Democrat* and the *Daily Forest City* threw hot shot into the *Plain Dealer* sanctum incessantly. The *Daily Recorder*, subsidized by Tom L. Johnson, fired invective while confessing itself “rather sorry for the . . . antique Plain Dealer. . . .”¹

All these critics finally fell. The *Plain Dealer* absorbed most of them.

In spite of the multiplicity of its enemies, however, and in spite of the unanimity of their desire to drive the *Plain Dealer* to the wall, the *Plain Dealer* felt bitterest toward Edwin Cowles and the *Leader*, which he had made such a conspicuous business and journalistic success.² He was the ablest and most persistent of the *Plain Dealer* enemies in the home field. He had the advantage of speaking for the political majority in the community. All in all, he was probably the most versatile and successful newspaper editor northern Ohio had produced.

Edwin Cowles died in 1890. Had he lived, the subsequent story of the *Leader* might have been different. On his death the control of the paper fell to hands less skilled than his own; its policies to the direction of men less alert to the changing situation in the field of newspaper publication.

One other conjecture may be slipped in at this point parenthetically. Elbert H. Baker was advertising manager and a member of the *Leader* board of directors before he came to the *Plain Dealer* in 1898. He tried to interest the management of the *Leader* in policies which he later put to such effective use on the *Plain Dealer*. Had the management listened to Baker, what then would have been the future course of events touching the relative progress of the two papers?

The Cleveland morning *Leader* came into existence in 1854

¹ *Recorder* editorial, December 21, 1895.

² Cowles was born at Austinburg, Ohio, September 9, 1825; died in Cleveland March 4, 1890.

through the merger of the *True Democrat* and the *Daily Forest City*. The next year Cowles became sole owner and proprietor. Under his direction, unbroken for thirty-five years, the *Leader* attained a phenomenal success.

In the *Leader's* estimation the *Plain Dealer* was a pro-slavery organ before the war, a copperhead sheet during the war, and an unreconstructed sympathizer with the South after Appomattox. The *Plain Dealer* looked on the *Leader* as an opinionated, supercilious plutocrat which lived so well on the fat of the land that intelligent reasoning on its part was no longer possible.

Such opponents and opposites were ready to fight at the drop of the hat. Some bone of contention was always at hand.

For years the *Leader* and the *Herald* had challenged each other's circulation figures. After the passing of the *Herald* the battle of circulation claims was shifted to the *Plain Dealer*. Until the advent of Baker and Kennedy the manager who swore to the highest totals was the accredited winner of the skirmish.

In the winter of 1886 circulation rivalry was forgotten momentarily while the two Sunday papers resisted an organized effort of Cleveland clergymen to stop their publication as "Satan's latest invention." The Sunday *Plain Dealer* had come into existence on the death of the *Herald*. The *Leader* had published on Sunday since 1877, being the first daily in or near Cleveland to issue an edition on the first day of the week.

The *Plain Dealer* and the *Leader* together resisted the effort of the clergy to drive the Sunday editions out of business. A boycott was proposed, the *Plain Dealer* replying that, generously, it would not suggest a counter-boycott against the pulpits. It offers a column or a column and a half each Sunday to be used by the clergy in any way it chooses. But, since ministers do not read the Sunday paper, the editor trusts that members of their churches will call their attention to the offer.³

The brief career of the *Recorder*, morning and evening, came

³ March 21, 1886.

to an end in the fall of 1897. It had been started a year or two before by George A. Robertson, formerly of the *Plain Dealer* staff and later a part owner of the *World*, and B. F. Bower. At the suggestion of Henry George, Lewis F. Post of New York was brought to Cleveland and became chief editorial writer for the *Recorder*. Tom L. Johnson undertook to make up its weekly deficits, hoping, as he wrote later, that the *Recorder* "might prove a truly democratic organ and thinking it might become self-supporting if it did not have too hard a struggle at the start."

First and last, Johnson said, he contributed \$80,000 to the enterprise. In 1897 he was compelled because of financial difficulties to withdraw his support.⁴ The *Recorder* could not stand on its own and before the end of the year was ready to abandon the field. It sold out to the *Plain Dealer*. By the purchase the *Plain Dealer* secured valuable equipment, but, it appears, little else. Post later became Assistant Secretary of Labor in the Wilson administration.

Every device honest ingenuity could conceive was enlisted to help the *Plain Dealer* gain ground against the *Leader*. The *Leader* by its attitude of unshakable overconfidence played into the hands of its opponent.

In January 1895, under the management of Charles E. Kennedy, came the woman's edition of the *Plain Dealer* — a week-day morning issue written and directed wholly by Cleveland women, with the help of whatever professional skill was required. The proceeds for the day, after the deduction of necessary expenses, went to the Friendly Inn, a social settlement institution then struggling with a troublesome budget. The idea, according to Kennedy, came from the women themselves, but the result of their labors built new prestige for the *Plain Dealer*.

⁴ These facts are taken largely from *My Story*, dictated by Mr. Johnson in the last months of his life. His subsidizing of the *Recorder* began half a dozen years prior to the time the *Plain Dealer* espoused him for mayor and adopted the pro-Johnson policy which was to continue, for the most part, until his death.

Two hundred women were engaged in the task. The editor-in-chief for the day was Mrs. Howard M. Ingham, the managing editor F. Jennie Duty, the exchange editor Mrs. George A. Robertson, and the society editor, Helen De K. Townsend. Mrs. Robertson was mother of the late Carl T. Robertson. Miss Townsend had a distinguished career as a newspaper woman in Cleveland and was author of the city's *Blue Book*, which for years fixed the status of all ambitious socialites.

Sporting Editor Nettie Nelson Amsden, or one of her staff, had an experience which was denied her associates when someone from the Cleveland Athletic Club called the department to say that a sparring match was scheduled for the club arena that afternoon and ought to be "covered" for the morning paper. It was a fake event and the reporter soon sensed it, writing in her story that it was "evidently got up especially for the women's edition of the Plain Dealer."

Allegedly, the bout was between Tom McGuirk of Meadville and Mike Murphy, a rolling-mill man from Newburg. In truth, the contestants were young men well known about town, handy with the gloves, but in no sense professionals in the ring. "One of the principles," the lady reported, "greatly resembled a gentleman often seen about the Cleveland Athletic Club." He did, indeed, being the gentleman himself! With good acting and a free use of beet juice at psychological times and places, the affair was given the semblance of a bloody fight well calculated to impress an impressionable young woman reporter occupying a ring-side seat for the first time. Reading her very brief account, one is in doubt whether the joke was finally on her or on the promoters of the "fight."

One of City Editor Lizzie Hyer Neff's reporters was the intended victim of another hoax, but was tipped off in time, only to see the *Leader* fall for the joke intended for her. Two days before the great edition City Clerk Howard Burgess told the young woman, in the presence of the *Leader's* City Hall reporter, about plans for a grand new municipal building. The

latter did not catch the Burgess wink intended to put him on guard, and he rushed the announcement into print!

The woman's edition ran five or six times larger than the usual issue of the paper. It taxed the facilities of the press-room, and ran the day's circulation into figures familiar to the manager only in his dreams.

When Julian Ralph came to Cleveland in April 1895 to write a story on the federal plan of government for *Harper's*, he expressed surprise that the city had no official flag. Thereupon the *Plain Dealer* inaugurated a competition and offered a cash prize for the winning design. The city council adopted the flag in October, and the *Plain Dealer* prize went to Miss Susie E. Hepburn of Columbus, who later became the wife of Robert K. Beach of the editorial staff. The flag was first unfurled at the Atlanta Exposition in the presence of a large delegation of Clevelanders who had gone by a special train sponsored by the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce.⁵

The late spring of 1899 saw the *Plain Dealer's* promotion of America's first long-distance automobile run, which carried the name of the paper to thousands who had never heard it before. The Glidden tours in and out of Boston had become famous. Charles B. Shanks of the *Plain Dealer* sports staff tried to persuade Glidden to undertake a tour to Cleveland. It was too far west, Glidden replied; roads were too uncertain.

All right, the *Plain Dealer* would sponsor its own tour. Alexander Winton agreed to drive his "hydro-carbon motor carriage" from Cleveland to New York, roads and circumstances permitting. Carrying Shanks as a passenger and reporter and, tucked into a pocket, a formal message of greeting from Mayor Farley to Mayor Van Wyck, Winton completed the journey of 707.4 miles in 47 hours and 30 minutes, running time. The average distance per hour was 14.5 miles. Said Farley to Van Wyck:

The city of Cleveland sends greetings to the executive of the nation's metropolis upon the occasion of the first long-distance automo-

⁵ November 11, 1895.

bile tour ever made upon this continent. New York and Cleveland have been long connected by water and by rail; now they are joined by the horseless carriage route.

And what a route! Of roads, in the present sense, there were none. Crowds greeted the adventurous tourists at every stopping place. "It is safe to say," wired Shanks to his editor, "that in five days' time no man ever saw and successfully steered away from as many stones and chuck holes as the doughty little automobile inventor has since our departure from the Forest City."

Winton and Shanks left Cleveland at 6 a.m., May 21. They reached New York City at 5.45 p.m., May 26.

Encouraged by the success of the New York tour, the *Plain Dealer* two years later sent Winton and Shanks on a venture designed to take them from San Francisco to New York, and make them the first men ever to cross the continent by motor car.

The start was made from the California city on the morning of May 20, 1901. "We shot away from the cheering mass and our journey was begun," Shanks reported. The *Plain Dealer* organized a contest, offering cash prizes for those best able to estimate the time found necessary to reach Manhattan.

Nine days after the cheering start, the trip was abandoned in the sands of Nevada. On May 30 Shanks wired the office:

Alexander Winton . . . has decided that, on account of the present condition of the roadways, or rather the utter absence of roadways through the sand hills over this great American desert, to put the enterprise through successfully is an utter impossibility. . . .

The automobile was yesterday afternoon deeply imbedded in a sand drift. Its driving wheels had spun around and cut deep into bottomless sand, so that the machine was left buried to the axles and there was seemingly no further use of employing block and tackle in pulling it from its position.

We could have employed men and horses to get us through and would have come out all right, but Mr. Winton was at once and for all times opposed to the use of foreign power. . . . No one in the east can imagine what the conditions of sand are in this desert country. . . .

The enterprise failed, but the *Plain Dealer* continued to build prestige. In August two years later an automobile succeeded in getting across the continent under its own power. The journey required fifty-two days.

All these activities, which might be termed extra-journalistic, were designed for one chief purpose only: namely, to create goodwill and a following for the *Plain Dealer*. The *Leader* was meanwhile unaware of the fact that its own grave was being dug by an industrious but unfeeling competitor.

Between the time of the successful Winton tour to New York and the time of Winton's attempt to cross the continent without roads came the famous circulation war between the *Plain Dealer* and the *Leader*. At its conclusion it was apparent to every unprejudiced person in the community that the old organ of Republicanism, built and nurtured by Edwin Cowles, was definitely on the decline. It would live for some years yet, but its sun was already dropping in the western sky.

In a heavily leaded first-page editorial in September 1900,⁶ the *Leader*, announcing its belief in "peace and prosperity," complained that "for two years past the Cleveland Plain Dealer has been attacking the business of the Cleveland Leader. The persons who operate that newspaper evidently hold that they cannot hope for success unless they succeed in pulling the Leader down. . . . The Cleveland Leader, satisfied with its own prosperity and willing to permit others to do business in their own way, has until now ignored the attacks of the Plain Dealer."

The statement was revealing as well as defiant. The *Leader* was "satisfied with its own prosperity"!

Replying to a *Leader* boast that it paid \$30,000 more per year for white paper than did the *Plain Dealer*, the latter proposed that a committee of prominent Cleveland advertisers be invited to examine, either in person or through expert accountants, the

⁶ September 8.

books of the two papers covering circulation, paper costs, and other details of the business, the facts as found to be published by both papers at the end of the inquiry.

The *Leader* accepted the proposal, but added eight conditions to its original terms. One of the eight contained the charge that "one of the properties allied with the Plain Dealer [meaning, apparently, the Hollenden Hotel] had been mortgaged for \$500,000," the money borrowed being Standard Oil money. Further, the *Leader* insisted, if the *Plain Dealer* accepted these terms, it would prove that the *Plain Dealer* did not sell 15,000 copies of its newspaper a day (morning and evening editions combined) and did not sell 15,000 copies on Sunday; that the *Plain Dealer* never used white paper amounting to as much as 2,000,000 pounds in any one year; that it lost over three quarters of a million dollars in the last fifteen years; that it was losing then more than \$40,000 a year.

There were other conditions. The *Plain Dealer* accepted them all forthwith.

Local interest in the pending expert inquiry was at high pitch. The *Plain Dealer* management, feeling sure of its ground, was eager for the show-down.

But just as the committee of investigation was ready to delve into the books for facts which would tell the fateful story, the *Leader* suddenly withdrew from the agreement. The inquiry was off. Some of its larger stockholders, the *Leader* declared, objected to uncovering its business secrets to an unmannerly competitor.

This was rare good luck for the *Plain Dealer*. The *Leader's* eleventh-hour renege was worth a motorized division to the newspaper on the offensive. A joint investigation being now impossible, the *Plain Dealer* decided to submit its own books to expert auditing and to publish the result. The inquiry showed that for the year ending September 1, 1900 the *Plain Dealer's* average Sunday circulation was 34,859; the morning, 30,564; the evening, 11,439.

In this same year the *Plain Dealer* had used 3,129,638 pounds of white paper. Further, the auditors declared, the "books . . . prove the paper to be making money and improving the plant from its receipts from circulation and advertising."

If one compares these expert findings with the situation in the *Plain Dealer* establishment which the *Leader* said it would uncover, relative to circulation, paper consumption, and the question of profit or loss, one sees how sadly uninformed the management of the *Leader* really was regarding the condition of its pestiferous rival. By publishing these facts, comparing them with what the *Leader* had boasted an investigation would show, and emphasizing the *Leader's* refusal to let an impartial committee look into its own books, the *Plain Dealer* capitalized a situation made to order for its own advantage.

From that time forth the days of the *Cleveland Leader* were numbered. For nearly seventeen years yet the paper would struggle on, but the community soon recognized that it was waging a losing battle.

The *Leader* was sold to Charles A. Otis, then to Medill McCormick, then to Dan R. Hanna. It disposed of its evening edition, as did the *Plain Dealer*. It moved into a magnificent new home opposite the *Plain Dealer* Building. It employed Charles E. Kennedy in the hope that, experienced across the street, he might show it the way to a lost glory.

But always at its heels was Elbert H. Baker, who thought faster, more clearly, than anyone the *Leader* could find; who sensed more accurately what a community expected of a twentieth-century newspaper, who comprehended the importance of leadership in the field of newspaper publication and, being a Western Reserve man by birth and background, was himself of the very warp and woof of the pattern of his community.

Four months after the United States had entered the World War, came the last issue of the morning *Leader*. A first-page announcement declared: "The Cleveland Plain Dealer has purchased for a valuable consideration the subscription lists, news

service franchise and good-will of the six-day *Leader* and will, beginning tomorrow morning, serve both its own and the six-day leader subscribers.”⁷

The arrangement did not affect the publication of the Sunday *Leader* or the *Cleveland News*.

The *Plain Dealer* was now Cleveland's only morning newspaper. Its position would be challenged briefly by a new morning paper, first called the *Commercial* and later the *Cleveland Times*, which began publication in March 1922 and continued for five years. It was said to have cost its sponsors about \$1,000,000. The *Plain Dealer* bought it for \$100,000.⁸

No better explanation of the circumstances which led to the *Plain Dealer's* defeat of the *Leader* has been given than that offered by *Town Topics*, Cleveland weekly, now deceased:

While the *Leader's* chief competitor was making strenuous efforts to build up a strong organization for the purpose of increasing its circulation and advertising, the *Leader* seemed wholly oblivious of this effort. It never for a moment seemed to think it could be headed off in this race for newspaper leadership. When finally it did come to comprehend the seriousness of the situation, it was too late. It was already in second place and, though it employed high-salaried newspaper men to stem the tide, it took outsiders who didn't seem to have quite the understanding of the city to turn out the right kind of reading matter. While its competitor moderated its political editorials and adopted a somewhat independent stand in politics, the *Leader* adhered to its hidebound policy of political partisanship.

Here was the epitaph of a once great and widely influential newspaper. It had slept while the enemy toiled!

⁷ August 21, 1917. The “valuable consideration,” Charles E. Kennedy wrote in his *Fifty Years of Cleveland*, was the payment by the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Co. to the Cleveland Co., publisher of the *Leader*, of the sum of \$750,000.

⁸ It was a common report that the late O. P. Van Sweringen, after seeking in vain to buy the *Plain Dealer*, became a substantial stockholder in the *Commercial*.

CHAPTER X

MEN BEHIND THE RAMPARTS

Scores of trained newspaper workers, most of them hardly known outside their own offices, devote their lives to Plain Dealer success. A few of them named.

He was an encyclopedia of the world's work, and especially of political history and events. By intuition he seemed to catch the motives, the underlying forces of all political movements. Every politician, every statesman, were actors in the drama of political life, and he was in attendance at their rehearsals. He knew their ins and outs. He knew their affiliations. . . . Few men were ever endowed with a better historical mind. "Large was his bounty and his soul sincere. . . ."

THUS wrote Liberty Emery Holden of John Herbert Aloysius Bone,¹ two and a half years his senior, on the occasion of the latter's death in the fall of 1906. Forgotten was the incident of 1893 when Mr. Holden, chief owner of the paper, deposed Mr. Bone from the chief editorship because he was dissatisfied with the editorials he wrote.

J. H. A. Bone was outstanding among the men who, after the establishment of the morning and Sunday editions, helped build the paper into the confidence and the everyday life of its community. He was one of the "assets" of the *Cleveland Herald* taken over by the *Plain Dealer* in 1885. He remained an asset for

¹ Born in Cornwall, England, October 31, 1830; died in Cleveland September 17, 1906.

the remaining twenty-one years of his life, an active newspaper man almost to his last day.

This son of Britain was intended for an army career, but an injury to his arm necessitated adoption of another pursuit, and journalism in America was enriched by the change. As a youth he did newspaper work in London and Liverpool. Going to Cleveland in 1851, he soon found himself sending unsolicited articles to the *Herald*, then Cleveland's most thriving and attractive daily. Six years later, on Editor Josiah A. Harris's invitation, Bone joined the *Herald* staff. Thereafter for practically half a century no publication day passed without contributions from this prolific, incisive writer.

In spite of the exactions of a daily newspaper routine, Bone found time to indulge in purely literary labor and his articles were to be found frequently in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, *Godey's*, *Peterson's*, and other popular periodicals of the day. He was on intimate terms of friendship with James Russell Lowell, spending days as his guest at Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was frequently urged to join the literary colony which included Longfellow, Aldrich, Emerson, and others whose names are familiar in the bookish annals of that flowering time of American literature.

But Bone preferred Cleveland to Cambridge. To him literature was an avocation. The smell of printer's ink and the noise of rumbling presses were pleasanter to him than the praises of literary critics. A collection of poems, written at moments of relaxation from newspaper duties, was issued in a small volume now long out of print. For the most part his work, aside from the daily routine, consisted of essays and articles on literary and historical subjects now to be found only in crumbling files of old publications.

Mr. Bone at one time or another filled virtually every position on the editorial staff of the *Herald*, from reporter of commercial facts to editor-in-chief. Coming to the *Plain Dealer* when the *Herald* suspended publication, an experienced and

well-known journalist, he soon became its editor. As a *Plain Dealer* man, however, he did his best work as chief editorial writer and as literary editor, continuing these duties almost to the end of a painful illness. When physically unable to come to the office any longer, he wrote daily from his death-bed and sent his articles by messenger.

His daughter, Estelle J. Bone, was one of the first newspaper women to be regularly employed in Cleveland.² She came to the *Plain Dealer* in 1886 and edited a household department.

In the first years of the Baker-Kennedy management there came to the *Plain Dealer* fresh from Oberlin College a young man who was to make his mark in another field, but one closely related to newspapers. He was John M. Siddall.³ He left the *Plain Dealer* after three years. He died in the prime of his usefulness as editor of the *American Magazine*.

Siddall began his connection with the *Plain Dealer* as college correspondent in his undergraduate days. He worked as a summer vacation member of the staff in Cleveland. Upon his graduation in 1898 he found his career pretty definitely marked out for him. He loved to write and found pleasure in directing the writing efforts of others. Ben Allen owed his first job on the paper to Siddall's friendship and assiduous watching from the inside for an opportunity for him.

Leaving the *Plain Dealer* in 1901, Siddall became associate editor of the *Chautauquan*, then published in Cleveland. He left this to become private secretary to Starr Cadwalader, director of the Cleveland public schools. He came into personal contact with the magazine world when Ida M. Tarbell came to Cleveland to gather material for her *History of the Standard*

² Born in Cleveland November 5, 1852; died in Cleveland December 13, 1925.

³ Born at Oberlin, Ohio, October 8, 1874; died at Ardsley-on-Hudson, New York, July 16, 1923.

Oil Company, which was published in *McClure's Magazine*. She was referred to Siddall as one likely to be interested in her quest.

This chance acquaintance led to Siddall's leaving Cleveland in 1904 to join the staff of *McClure's Magazine*. Two years later he joined a group of *McClure's* writers to found the *American Magazine*. He became its editor-in-chief in 1915. The publication prospered greatly, increasing its circulation from 400,000 to 2,000,000 in the eight years of his editorship. His brief, inspirational editorials under the caption "Sid Says" were welcomed as the emanations of a mind fresh from the sources of American life and unspoiled by contact with a selfish world.

"Every individual," said Siddall, "is more interested in himself than in anything else in the world." Sticking to that theme, he made the *American Magazine* outstanding among the monthlies. Dying before he was fifty, he was mourned as one who had made for himself a permanent niche in the world of magazine publication.

When Siddall's college class celebrated its twenty-fifth reunion, the *American's* editor was chosen for special distinction by the trustees. He was voted an honorary degree in token of his achievements. But when the time came to confer the honor, Siddall was too ill to attend. It was granted in absentia. In the following month he died.

Three Weidenthals, brothers, have been identified with the *Plain Dealer* in this period. The oldest, Maurice,⁴ came to the paper from the *Herald* when it suspended publication in 1885, and held various posts of responsibility before he retired in 1906 to become first editor of the newly established *Jewish Independent* in Cleveland. The second brother was Henry J.,⁵ who began his newspaper career with the *Plain Dealer* but spent the last

⁴ Born at Miskolcz, Hungary, October 5, 1853; died in Cleveland July 21, 1917.

⁵ Born in Cleveland February 2, 1870; died in Cleveland July 8, 1940.

years of it with the *News*. Leo, the third brother, left the *Plain Dealer* in 1917 to succeed his brother as editor of the *Independent*. The Cleveland city council by resolution expressed its regret at his leaving.

A chance circumstance helped William Sykes Couch⁶ climb fast from cubdom to a high journalistic position. That he would have ultimately attained the position anyway, one need not doubt.

Working his way through Western Reserve University, he was graduated in 1900 and came immediately to the *Plain Dealer* reportorial staff. In September 1901 word came over the wire from Buffalo that President McKinley had been shot. A special train was quickly assembled by Senator Hanna to take friends to the bedside. The city editor found that young Couch was the only man immediately available to send on the Hanna train.

He did so well on this assignment, difficult for an inexperienced man, that Couch was recognized at once as a rising star in newspaperdom. In 1902 there was a vacancy in the Columbus news bureau and Couch was named to fill it. A year later he was promoted to head the bureau at Washington.

Couch won recognition there as a keen observer and intelligent interpreter of the events which featured the administration of the first Roosevelt, and the first year of the Taft regime. He was a man of many friendships, widely respected and admired. He left the *Plain Dealer* in the summer of 1909.

He was succeeded at Columbus and again at Washington by Ben F. Allen.

A brilliant career in the service of the *Plain Dealer* came to a tragic end when in the fall of 1919 a motor car overturned on the Columbia Highway near Portland, Oregon. The accident took the life of "Big Ben" Allen — Benjamin Farwell Allen, to

⁶ Born at Madison, Ohio, May 18, 1878; died in Washington, D. C., January 11, 1914.

give him his baptismal name — head of the paper's news bureau at Washington.

Few men in the long history of the *Plain Dealer* have reflected greater credit on the paper than he. The deaths of few have been more widely noted or more sincerely mourned. The press gallery at the Capitol said of Allen: "Brilliant, energetic, human, an able commentator upon public events, a faithful reporter of world-moving affairs, he adorned our profession and made it a greater one."

Ben Allen, son of a Congregational minister, came to the *Plain Dealer* from Oberlin in 1899.⁷ After working as political reporter in Cleveland, he became Columbus correspondent in 1907 and Washington correspondent two years later. He had been a star baseball pitcher at college, and keeping his eye on the bases was a habit he carried into newspaper reporting as long as he lived. "More than six feet tall," a friend once said of Allen, "he was as big of heart as he was of body."

Allen served his paper at the national capital through most of the Taft administration; he saw the advent of Wilson, the great reform measures of the Democratic regime, witnessed and interpreted the rising tide of war sentiment, cheered the American boys as they advanced to the poppy fields of France and saw those who survived come back. He sympathized with Wilson in his losing fight for the League of Nations, reflecting his paper's support of the President on that issue.

Death came to Ben Allen as, following his tour of duty, he accompanied Mr. Wilson on his swing into the West to carry his appeal for the League over the heads of senators to the folk back home. The journey failed to save the cause of the League; it cost the newspaper corps at Washington one of its ablest members; it ended in the tragedy of Woodrow Wilson's collapse and the beginning of his end as a leader of American thought.

In his wire of condolence to Mrs. Allen, the President de-

⁷ Born at Alpena, Michigan, September 26, 1877; died at Portland, Oregon, September 15, 1919.

clared her husband would be "missed as a true friend and a man who always intelligently sought to do his duty." As an interpreter, observing and reporting events from the vantage point of the nation's capital, Ben Allen served his paper and its community through a decade of fast-moving and vastly important events. A warm personality brought him a host of friends.

Ben F. Allen belongs in the galaxy of *Plain Dealer* men worthy to be considered among its builders.

From the *Columbus Dispatch* to the *Plain Dealer* in 1892 came Edward B. Lilley,⁸ who for a dozen years under the Baker-Kennedy regime was its managing editor. Under him served Erie C. Hopwood, who became editor of the paper nine years after Lilley left, and Paul Bellamy, Hopwood's successor in the chief editorship.

In the days when the *Plain Dealer* had but a single telephone on the fourth floor of the old building, Lilley was an editorial writer and had the duty of calling up L. E. Holden at night and reading him his output for the day. News editors and reporters were thus privileged to have read in their presence the opinions their paper would express in print the next morning. It was said by those who later recalled the situation that they enjoyed the nightly drama better than Lilley did.

He left the *Plain Dealer* in August 1911 to become editor and publisher of the *Cleveland News*, then owned by Charles A. Otis. Upon the sale of the *News* to Hanna in 1912, Lilley became managing editor of the *Los Angeles Express and Tribune*, and was later assistant to the publisher of those papers. Later he went to St. Louis as general manager of the *St. Louis Republic*. The end of his life came on a California ranch to which he had retired in 1917 in an effort to recover his health.

⁸ Born at Paris, Illinois, September 15, 1866; died at Ontario, California, July 24, 1920. A son, Charles J. Lilley, is editor and general manager of the *Sacramento (California) Union*. A grandson, Merrill Edward Lilley, is editor of the *Post-Dispatch* at Pittsburg, California.

For years before his death in the winter of 1927 William Russell Rose was proud to carry the title of dean of Cleveland newspaper men.⁹ He came to the *Plain Dealer* in 1896 at the invitation of Manager Charles E. Kennedy, having already had some years of experience, first on the *Sunday Voice* and later with the *Cleveland Press*.

It is related that "Bob" Paine, popular editor of the *Press*, hailed Rose on the street one day and said: "Billy, you have been printing facetious remarks about our editorials. If you think you can write better ones, let me see 'em." Rose did so and remained with the *Press* until, as an experiment, the editorial page was abolished. Not long thereafter he came to the *Plain Dealer*.

He performed a variety of editorial tasks, wrote editorials, conducted a column of comment and humor, and every Sunday for decades wrote a fictional piece which attracted wide attention. He sat in at the making of much Cleveland and Western Reserve history and with his pen helped preserve the annals of a region rich in historic lore.

The title of editor of the *Plain Dealer*, unused for many years, was revived in 1920 and given to Erie C. Hopwood.¹⁰ Few men ever brought to the *Plain Dealer* greater gifts than he, and none ever made greater use of his gifts to the glory of newspaper-making in Ohio.

Erie Hopwood was thoroughly a product of the Western Reserve. Born of parents indigenous to the region, he was educated there and, except for one brief year when he taught school at Middletown, spent his whole life on the soil of the old Reserve. His eminence as a newspaper man was recognized in

⁹ Born at Ithaca, New York, September 12, 1851; died in Cleveland February 16, 1927.

¹⁰ Born at North Eaton, Ohio, February 7, 1877; died in Cleveland March 18, 1928.

1936, eight years after his death, by his election to the Hall of Fame at Ohio State University.¹¹

Starting as a police reporter under City Editor William R. Merrick in 1902, Hopwood climbed steadily through the ranks to become in turn city editor, night editor, managing editor, and finally editor of the paper. With him newspaper work was a passion as well as a job. By hard work and exacting self-discipline, he had won his diploma with high scholastic standing at Western Reserve University. By the same means he climbed the journalistic ladder to its top. He spared himself no pains. Hours meant nothing to him. Always he studied to prepare himself for the job just ahead.

Hopwood was a graduate of the Elbert H. Baker school. He put into practice through many years the principles Baker taught: news without editorial bias, clean news, civic responsibility, the importance of sound leadership, the high place a self-respecting newspaper should occupy in its community. He had business sense as well as editorial sense, realizing that the modern editor has a wider obligation than merely to write incisive English or keep the news-gathering organization on its toes.

After his reportorial days Hopwood did little actual writing for the paper. The words written were the words of other men, but the ideals that shone through them were his. He was an organizer, an executive, as well as a student of public issues. Men respected his judgment and came from afar to confer with him on issues of grave importance.

When Dr. O. W. Thompson resigned as president of Ohio State University Hopwood was given serious consideration as his successor. One of the trustees sent an emissary to the editor. Hopwood, while appreciating the compliment, said he preferred to remain as editorial chief of the *Plain Dealer*.

¹¹ Two other *Plain Dealer* men are members of the Hall of Fame: Artemus Ward, admitted in 1931, and Elbert H. Baker, admitted in 1938.

He was one of the small group which organized the American Society of Newspaper Editors, serving in succession as its secretary and president. He was one of the early presidents of the Cleveland City Club, an organization widely famous as a forum for the uncensored discussion of public questions. To every proposal for the strengthening of democratic institutions he gave time from busy days and help from a generous heart which beat in sympathy with every just cause.

His death at fifty-one brought forth such a volume of appreciative comment from the leaders of American thought as is given only to those who have truly achieved great things. In any appraisal of the scores of men who have made the *Plain Dealer* what it has become in these hundred momentous years, Erie Clark Hopwood merits a resplendent place. He set his life's goals high and while still in the prime of manhood saw them attained.

For thirty-seven years George V. Callahan ¹² served the *Plain Dealer* as marine editor, achieving a distinction the like of which no other man along the lakes ever attained. In pre-radio days news of the movements of vessels up and down this inland sea came largely by telegraph and newspaper publication and was of prime importance to thousands. As business on the lakes grew, Callahan grew with it, keeping a finger on this vast check-board of commerce. His name and the fame of his exact and understanding reporting were familiar from one end of the chain to the other.

"Skipper" Callahan well earned his reputation, acknowledged by one of the high officials of the M. A. Hanna Company at the time of Callahan's death, as "the best marine reporter on the Great Lakes."

¹² Born in Cleveland January 19, 1865; died in Cleveland February 23, 1932.

One of the most widely known of *Plain Dealer* men in the first third of the century was Carl Trowbridge Robertson,¹³ associate editor, nature-lover, traveler, and teller of romantic tales of many lands. His love for newspaper work and his aptitude for it came by inheritance, for his father, George A. Robertson, spent his life among the editorial desks of Cleveland. His mother wrote much for newspapers and was one of the editors of the *Plain Dealer's* woman's edition in 1895.

A Central High School and Harvard College product, Robertson did his first newspaper work on the *Cleveland Recorder*, which his father had founded in co-operation with B. F. Bower. The following year found him a reporter on the *Plain Dealer*, and with this paper he remained till the end of a fruitful life.

For many years a steady stream of editorials poured from his desk, covering every phase of American life. Latterly he turned his attention to foreign affairs. Great numbers of men and women of European extraction in Cleveland constantly showed their appreciation of his sympathetic interpretations of the problems of their home lands. During the World War, too old for the service of his country, he kept in close touch with developments abroad through four long, bloody years and in scores of columns of comment helped *Plain Dealer* readers to understand world-shaking events on the other side of the sea.

Robertson was best beloved, however, for the inquisitive, adventurous spirit which led him to many lands and found expression in gems of writing that for years lightened the pages of the *Plain Dealer*. No secret of nature was so seemingly trivial as not to excite his interest. His "daily diary," started at the suggestion of Erie C. Hopwood, ran on the editorial page to the delight of thousands.

This middle-aged man who crawled on hands and knees in the stillness of midnight to study insect songsters was not content with Mammoth Cave as tourists had known it for years,

¹³ Born at North Bloomfield, Ohio, January 31, 1876; died at Rabat, Morocco, June 2, 1935.

but wiggled through an inconspicuous aperture in the cave's wall to discover new glories beyond, which no human eye had ever before beheld. This newly discovered section of the cave was later opened to tourists and bears the name of Robertson, as its discoverer. This adventurous spirit led him to join the expedition sent out by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History in 1923, which took him across the Atlantic to Cape Verde in the 130-ton schooner, the *Blossom*. There, because of ill health, Robertson left the expedition, returning to Cleveland.

Robertson was ever a restless soul. The monotony of daily routine got on his nerves. Distant places, other continents, whispered in his ear invitations he found hard to resist. In one series of articles after another, written in the excellent English he had at command, he described for admiring readers trips he had taken abroad. Classic tales of history he retold in his own vibrant words and made their famous actors live again.

Next to travel and exploration, whist and later auction and contract bridge were Robertson's warmest attachments. He became one of America's best players and the trophies he won as a member of Cleveland teams reached a surprising total. And with all these activities as avocations, Carl Robertson maintained a daily output of editorials and at times of literary criticism that would have kept the average man busy.

He died, as doubtless he would have chosen to die, far from the scene of his office labors, on a new journey of adventure into the lands of historic romance. Death came to him suddenly. Today in Moorish Africa lies the body of one whose boyish interest in the affairs of nature and of man never grew dull.

To meet their country's call in four wars *Plain Dealer* men have left their desks, donned uniforms, and fought for liberty. Not one of them was more a soldier, or a better one, than Lieutenant Colonel William Cooper Howells.¹⁴ He came from a

¹⁴ Born at Jefferson, Ohio, November 16, 1887; died at McConnellsville, Ohio, April 3, 1940.

newspaper family, was a grand-nephew of the novelist William Dean Howells, and though intended for the medical profession, found the inherited trend too strong to resist. He came to the *Plain Dealer* as a reporter in 1909, became Sunday editor, and for fifteen years was head of the *Plain Dealer* news bureau at Columbus. He served as a lieutenant of infantry on the Mexican border, and as captain on the fields of France. Later he attained the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Ohio National Guard. His last few years were spent in the home office, performing the tasks of an associate editor. His body lies among the nation's honored dead in Arlington.

When James H. Rogers¹⁵ retired in 1932 to spend his remaining days in California, the occasion was given civic significance. For seventeen years he had been musical critic for the *Plain Dealer*. For fifty years he had been organist and musical director at the Euclid Avenue Temple.

And while attending to these duties he had taught innumerable classes in piano, composed musical works that remain classics, and made himself, without the slightest ostentation, a leader of cultural life in the community.

When Rogers at the age of seventy-five decided to drop activities which were becoming burdensome with advancing years, the expression of the city's regret at his departure, translated into farewell dinners and less formal good-by parties, constituted such a tribute of respect as is given to few in any walk of life. Religious, educational, and political leaders united in the chorus of praise.

The *Plain Dealer* probably never had a more popular staff member than James H. Rogers.

¹⁵ Born at Fair Haven, Connecticut, February 7, 1857; died at Pasadena, California, November 28, 1940.

CHAPTER XI

SUCCESS THROUGH CO-OPERATION

The Plain Dealer's greatest asset is the loyalty of those who get out the paper each day. The Old Timers. The Beneficial Association.

WITHOUT complete loyalty on the part of the men and women who comprise its editorial, business, and mechanical staffs the *Plain Dealer* would not have lived to observe its centenary. Without such loyalty no paper can in the long run achieve success. The men in the ranks give the general his victory.

The *Plain Dealer* has, of course, deliberately cultivated this loyalty and encouraged the spirit of co-operation now so widely acknowledged as the hall-mark of its daily performance. Those long in the paper's employ carry the fact as a badge of distinction.

Through the years the *Plain Dealer* has had a minimum of labor troubles. The management has been fair with employees and they have reciprocated with fair treatment in return.

This same policy of square dealing has extended through all departments. The necessary great expansion of personnel has not altered the policy. The doors of those in authority are always open even to the humblest worker with a complaint to make or a suggestion to offer.

The result is a "happy family" atmosphere about the *Plain Dealer* establishment often noted by office visitors from out of Cleveland. It follows, of course, that the paper suffers a com-

paratively small turnover of employment. Good pay, job security, and pleasant surroundings combine to urge employees to remain.

Modern conditions tend to stabilize newspaper employment everywhere. The "tramp printer" has become an extinct species. The "tramp" reporter and the "tramp" advertising solicitor have joined him in permanent eclipse. Papers like the *Plain Dealer* were instrumental in hastening the discard of the "tramps." When men cling to their jobs as something worth working to retain, there is little chance for the fly-by-night.

Plain Dealer employees feel that they belong to a sort of informal brotherhood, bound together by common ideals of service. Once well established, they know their employment is permanent — permanent, that is, as long as they meet the fair requirements of their individual jobs.

Daily association of men with each other develops fraternal feeling and the wish to do things in partnership. In this the heads of the institution have given every proper assistance.

An example is seen in the *Plain Dealer* Beneficial Association, organized by employees in September 1907. It originally provided only a sick benefit. A small weekly payment insured each member against the economic loss resulting from accident or illness.

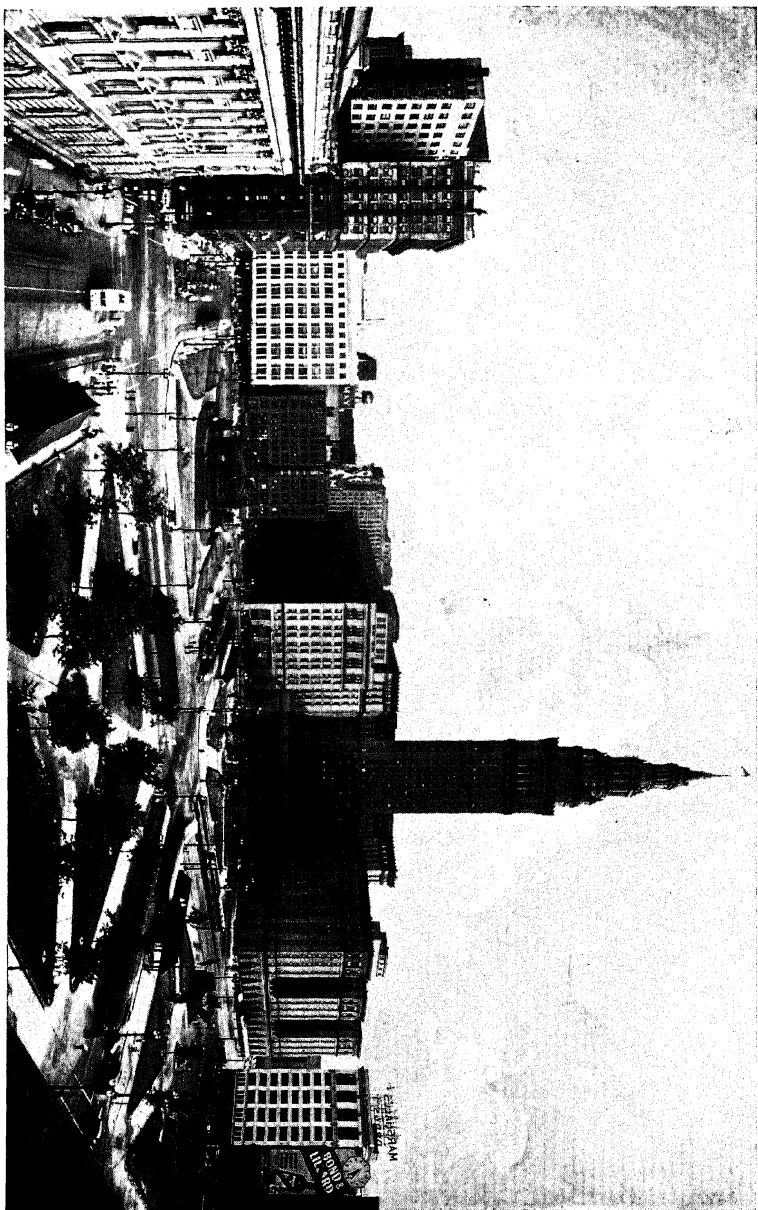
The scope of the organization was broadened in January 1920, and for the first time the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company took official cognizance of it. A death benefit was added and the company agreed to pay into the treasury of the association dollar for dollar with the association members' own contributions.

The plan has worked exceedingly well. Every claim has been paid promptly. Many a widow of a *Plain Dealer* employee has found this a great and instant help at the moment when her little world seemed in collapse about her. The Beneficial Association is officered entirely by employees. Its membership had risen in the summer of 1941 to 774. There were then 954 *Plain*



CUYAHOGA RIVER AND VALLEY IN 1942

An aerial photograph of the same section of Cleveland as shown facing page 9. These contrasting pictures, taken one hundred years apart, indicate something of what has happened in Cleveland since the birth of the Plain Dealer.



THE CLEVELAND PUBLIC SQUARE, 1942

Compare this with the picture facing page 8.

Dealer men and women working in the *Plain Dealer* Building, not all of whom, however, were eligible for membership.¹

Famous is the *Plain Dealer's* Old Timers Club, whose annual dinner and business meeting have become a local event in Cleveland. It is a loose organization without governing rules or by-laws. All expenses of the yearly occasion are borne by the paper itself — a compliment paid the employees by the owners and management.

To become eligible for membership one must have been a *Plain Dealer* employee for at least twenty years. At the organization meeting on November 25, 1924 forty-four of the forty-five charter members were present. In the summer of 1941 thirteen of these forty-four were still active members of the organization and on the payroll of the paper. Others who were at that first meeting have been retired or have left the service of the *Plain Dealer*.

The men and women who attended the organization meeting were conscious of the fact, as was the management, that they were taking a step without any exact precedent. The years since have demonstrated the wisdom of the move. It has helped cement the friendly relations among the scores of employees privileged to be members.

The first president of the Old Timers was the late Erie C. Hopwood. Of the five officers elected at the first meeting only one survives. He is William G. Vorpe, now dean of the staff and active as Sunday and feature editor. Except for one year, when he served as president, he has remained secretary of the club ever since that first meeting.

Each year, at noon on a winter day, the Old Timers gather for dinner, witness some mock device for admitting new members, listen to a skit, a program of entertainment, or — rarely in recent years — an address. Radio stars, ordinarily known only by voice through the channels of the air, come in person to pay

¹ Some are part-time workers; some have not yet worked the month required by the constitution before they become eligible.

professional homage to the press. The popular floor shows about town contribute their share to an occasion as unique as it is pleasurable.

Owners and managers of the paper invariably attend. The lowliest employee eats with the bosses. Salary or wage distinctions are forgotten. The Old Timers are dedicated to fellowship. Their only pledge, made on admission, is to stand by each other and to give the best they have to the success of the *Plain Dealer*.

It would be difficult to find a situation parallel with this of the *Plain Dealer* Old Timers. For an institution of the size of this newspaper to have more than one fifth of its employees veterans of more than twenty years' service speaks of conscientious co-operation on both sides. The paper has been loyal to its men and women, and they to it, all these years. The Old Timers organization had reached a total membership of 206 in 1941.

Elsewhere has been witnessed strife, recrimination, acts and gestures of hostility, but the big *Plain Dealer* family has, for the most part, dwelt together in harmony. The years of its individual members' service to the paper speak with the tongue of eloquence of obligations met and satisfaction earned.

In the list of members are found the names of the president of the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company, its secretary-treasurer, its general manager, and the editor of the paper. Also one finds the names of women whose service to the paper is identified with the early morning rite of scrubbing the offices and corridors of the building.

The *Plain Dealer's* concern for its employees goes far beyond its contribution to the Beneficial Association and beyond its financing of the annual dinner of the Old Timers. It follows them into retirement. It intercedes with fate to see that the man or woman who has given his best to the paper through years of active endeavor is not left friendless in the few years which remain to him.

Years ago the *Plain Dealer* established what is called the "retired payroll." To this roll, with a continuing weekly payment

adequate to his requirements, an employee no longer able to render a full measure of service is graciously transferred. Usually, in the case of one who has given many years to the paper, the occasion of his retirement is made ceremonious, with the executives participating.

He joins the "alumni," does what he wishes with his new-found leisure, and knows that back among the boys his memory is green.

Twenty-three former employees comprise the "retired payroll" as these lines are written in the summer of 1941. They are, in effect, members of the great *Plain Dealer* family enjoying a well-earned leave of absence.

Another token of the paper's interest in its employees and its wish to help make them good citizens as well as faithful workers is to be seen in a policy, established more than twenty years ago, of loaning money to individual employees to help them build homes. By a vote of the directors in March 1921 the board committed itself to the lending policy. Prior to that, three such transactions had already been entered into. All are second mortgage loans, repayable in installments made low enough not to be burdensome. There are now between twenty and thirty such contracts outstanding.

The result of the policy has been encouraging from the point of view of both the borrower and the lender. There has been practically no loss. The benefits of home-ownership have been brought within reach of men who might not otherwise have been able to realize them.

No taint of paternalism mars this relationship between the *Plain Dealer* and the men and women who contribute to its success. In this as in any other field of activity, a person takes out in benefits and satisfaction about what he puts in. The rewards for sincere and genuine service rendered through the years is security and contentment at life's twilight.

The *Plain Dealer*, in friendly co-operation with its hundreds of employees, tries to contribute to the achievement of this goal.

The results speak for themselves. They need neither interpreter nor eulogist.

Men who idly argue that the corporate form of enterprise in America necessarily lends itself to heartlessness, to indifference to human rights, to inescapable abuses, to injustice and employee dissatisfaction, may learn something by a study of the *Plain Dealer*. Here is evidence to support the thesis that fair dealing between employer and employee, continuous through many years, brings the coveted reward to both.

Plain Dealer men and women are proud of their association with each other and with those who carry the burdens of management. The fact that the paper is owned by a corporation, chartered by the state, concerns them not at all.

CHAPTER XII

THE RATTLE OF MUSKETRY, THE CLASH OF TANKS

*Contrasts in methods of war reporting epitomize
the progress of newspaper work in general.
The guess gives way to the know.*

AMERICA has engaged in four wars since the founding of the *Plain Dealer* one hundred years ago. This takes no account of the conflict raging abroad in 1941, into which the United States is in imminent prospect of being drawn as these lines are written.

A study of how these wars were covered in the news sense — how *Plain Dealer* readers were kept in touch with the events of the Mexican War, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and the World War — reveals interesting contrasts in news-gathering methods and facilities between the then and the now of journalism.

The *Plain Dealer* as a daily was one year old when the war on Mexico began in April 1846. It was a "Democratic war" and Editor Gray gave it cordial support. The *Cleveland Herald*, being Whig, took the general Whig attitude of opposition. It was, in the opinion of Proprietor J. A. Harris, a war of inexcusable aggression, for which President Polk and the pro-slavery interests were solely responsible.

For the Cleveland newspapers the task of keeping patrons informed of the progress of developments below the Rio Grande was difficult and often inadequately performed. The *Plain*

Dealer and the *Herald* alike had access to whatever the "magnetic telegraph" offered, but this was often composed of conjecture, of reports frankly questioned, and always of events which had occurred days before the news of them reached Cleveland.

Mexican news in general came by steamer to New Orleans or Mobile and was then sent by railroad or other means to the nearest telegraph station. Cleveland's wire connection with the rest of the country was by a single line from Pittsburgh. Some of the Eastern newspapers had correspondents at the front, but they were handicapped by a lack of facilities for getting their dispatches to the home offices. The Cleveland papers could not afford such correspondents.

Supplementing the scant and usually delayed reports by wire, were letters by mail, sometimes to the editors but often to relatives at home who were occasionally thoughtful enough to permit some favorite newspaper to print them for the information they contained.

Eastern cities had the benefit of rail communication part way to the scene of war. As for Cleveland, the first spadeful of earth was taken from the right of way of the city's first railroad two weeks after the fall of Mexico City and the virtual end of the war.

Even with the better facilities of the Eastern cities, the news from the battlefields of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma required eighteen days to reach New York. The fall of the Mexican capital came on September 14, 1847. The *Plain Dealer* and the *Herald* announced the victory on October 4 in a paragraph whose circumlocutory phraseology was characteristic of Mexican War reporting, as seen in Cleveland:

Cincinnati, Oct. 2, 8 P.M.

A note from the Post Master at New Orleans to Post Master in Washington, dated the 26 ult., states that the steamer J. L. Day had arrived from Vera Cruz, bringing news that the City of Mexico had been taken.

On the same day the *Plain Dealer* gave bigger news play to an item relative to the ending of an armistice which had given the fighting men at the front a brief breathing-spell. The dispatch here quoted was credited to the *Pittsburgh Journal*:

At a very late hour last night the following highly important intelligence was telegraphed via Richmond —

Philadelphia, Sept. 30, 10 P.M.

An extra from the office of the Mobile Tribune, dated Sept. 25th, received by Pony Express, announces the arrival at Pensacola of the Brig Osceola on the evening of the 21st after a passage of five days from Vera Cruz. The following is an extract of a letter of the Sun of Anahuac, dated Pueblo Sept. 11th. . . .

Then follows the substance of the news; namely, that the armistice had been ended and the fighting resumed. And this was printed in Cleveland three weeks after the fall of the enemy capital!

As if to assure its readers that the news of Mexico City's fall was reliable, the *Plain Dealer* two weeks later remarked: "That Gen. Scott with from 7,000 to 10,000 men is now in possession of the City of Mexico, nobody doubts. . . ."¹

Sometimes the war news came in the way indicated by this paragraph from the *Cleveland Herald*:

We copy from the Washington Union a letter from an officer who participated in the bloody battles before the City of Mexico which presents, says the Union, the most graphic and correct details we have seen. . . .²

As was customary, the name of the officer and recorder of history was not given.

In the fourteen years between the Mexican War and the Civil War railroads and the telegraph stretched farther and farther across the country; the Atlantic cable had been laid, but after a short time failed to work. The Associated Press had been or-

¹ October 18, 1847.

² *Herald*, September 22, 1847.

ganized on a small scale by a group of New York publishers. Metropolitan papers, waxing strong, had corps of correspondents ready to follow the armies to every battlefield.

By 1860 there were 29,000 miles of railroads in operation and pioneer lines were pushing toward the Pacific coast. Telegraph lines had reached a total mileage of 50,000.

The stage was set for a far better performance of war reporting than had been possible when Scott and Taylor marched into Mexico. The performance was, of course, much improved. It was unsatisfactory only when compared with the news coverage given in later wars.

By 1860, foreseeing or guessing at the events of the next five years, practically every one of the New York papers maintained a staff of special correspondents in the South. The opinion has been expressed that, as a result largely of their reporting, when the outbreak of the war came the North had a far better idea of what went on in the Southern mind than did the South of the Northern mind. Except for this the course of history might have been changed.

When war came these correspondents were trained and ready to take the field with the Union armies. They strove against censors, against thin-skinned commanders, against inadequate rail and telegraph facilities, to do what, in the retrospect, must be considered a pretty efficient job.

This kind of service, however, was not for the newspapers of Cleveland. Even the *Leader*, riding high in a radically pro-war community, had not reached the opulence which seemed to justify the employment of a staff of correspondents with the armies. The *Plain Dealer* after May 1862 was under the control of John S. Stephenson, who, finally turning his back on the war policy of his uncle, J. W. Gray, led the paper gradually into public disfavor. The *Plain Dealer*, under such circumstances, certainly could not sustain the luxury of having its own special correspondents at the front.

As early as the winter of 1862 the *Leader* boasted that it was

the only paper in the Western states, outside of Cincinnati and Chicago, which procured special reports from Washington. It printed parallel columns to show how it beat the *Plain Dealer* and the *Herald* with news of the war.³

The *Plain Dealer* ridicules its contemporary's "stupendous enterprise" and insists that the *Leader's* special dispatches are clipped from exchanges.⁴ So the *Plain Dealer* says it buys a new pair of scissors!

Lest its readers be misled by hostile and belittling propaganda, the *Leader* explains:

The fact is the *Plain Dealer* — as well as the *Herald* — is chagrined at the enterprise of the *Leader* in procuring news by the employment of special telegraphic correspondence. The *Plain Dealer's* limited circulation will not warrant the enormous expense incurred by the publishers of the *Leader* for special dispatches; hence, the wilful misrepresentation and perversion of facts.⁵

In this same month the government established military control of all telegraph lines, the policy of the year before, of taking control only of the lines radiating from Washington, having proved ineffective. This administration move greatly hampered the work of the correspondents, and various devices were resorted to in order to avoid its rigors.

The *Plain Dealer*, having no correspondents, could indulge in the "reflection that it is for the good and ultimate success of the cause and that the order [forbidding the publication of military news] indicates immediate and important movements, having for their object a speedy crushing of the rebellion. . . ." ⁶

Cleveland's sixth railroad — the Atlantic & Great Western — was completed into the city the day following Lee's repulse at Gettysburg. The mail service, resorted to by correspondents when they were denied access to the wires, could now be used to better advantage to keep newspaper readers informed of

³ February 7.

⁴ February 14.

⁵ February 20.

⁶ February 26.

events at the front. And a surprising proportion of Civil War news reached these Western newspapers, convoyed by a postage stamp.

The Battle of Gettysburg began on July 1 and ended two days later. On the afternoon of the 3rd the *Plain Dealer*, discussing the battle, remarked: "The engagement which must have taken place yesterday we know nothing of at this date. . . ." The next day, being Independence Day, no *Plain Dealer* was published. The 5th was Sunday and hence no *Plain Dealer*.

On Monday afternoon, the 6th, the *Plain Dealer* announced the "glorious victory," basing its news on a special dispatch from Baltimore to the *New York Herald*. It also printed General Meade's official report of the battle, dated July 3 at 8.30 p.m.

The *Leader*, with no compunctions against printing an edition on the Fourth, announced that day that "in the battle of Gettysburg the Federal troops were entirely successful. . . ."

Although Associate Editor Hoyt attended the Gettysburg dedication two months and a half later and heard the famous Lincoln address, the *Plain Dealer* contented itself with the announcement the next afternoon that, "the weather being fine, the program was carried out successfully." One day later an "eloquent extract" from Edward Everett's oration at Gettysburg was printed.

Former *Plain Dealer* men in the Union armies occasionally wrote letters from the front, but with Gray gone much of their warm affection for the paper was gone also. Extracts from other papers, printed under the head "Telegraphic," filled many columns. Letters from unnamed officers, conjectural reasoning based on inadequate facts, scant dispatches innocuous enough to get by the censors or clever enough to detour them — such was the bulk of Civil War reporting as made to the Cleveland papers.

The unconvincing character of much of this reporting is indicated by a statement of the *Plain Dealer* on the afternoon of the last day of Gettysburg that "there are tolerably circumstantial

statements that Gens. Dix and Keyes are marching upon Richmond with 50,000 men. . . ." On the last afternoon of 1863 the paper printed a report from Chattanooga, under a Fortress Monroe date line, quoting the *Richmond Inquirer* of the 24th!

Illustration of war situations and events was confined largely to the weeklies. *Harper's* was in its glory, with its still-remembered woodcuts. Occasionally a Cleveland paper would offer a map to show some plan of battle; occasionally the cut of a general. That was about all.

Civil War reporting was certainly better than Mexican War reporting. Public interest in the fight between the states was many times stronger than in the previous war. But the real improvement — one is tempted to say, the perfection — in war-reporting technique was reserved for a future clash of arms.

Between Appomattox and the sinking of the *Maine* thirty-three years elapsed. They were years of elaboration in the mechanism of news collection and dissemination. Events of the War with Spain at the end of the century never gripped the emotions of the American people as did those of the Civil War or the World War. The results were taken for granted before the first shots were fired. It may be said, however, that the profession of war correspondent reached its apogee in that war.

It has been remarked that "the armadas of dispatch boats loaded with reporters, feature writers and photographers, sent down by some of the New York papers were about as formidable as Sampson's fleet, and their doings took up pretty nearly as much space in the dispatches."⁷

The *Plain Dealer* did not — could not — indulge in such extravagance. Elbert H. Baker came to the paper, under the Baker-Kennedy lease, in the same month that Manila surrendered to Dewey; the same month that Schley shut Cervera's fleet in the bay at Santiago. The *Plain Dealer* did what Baker liked to describe as "a good job of reporting," but it had to be done with the resources of an inopulent treasury.

⁷ Elmer Davis in the *History of the New York Times*.

A year before the start of the War with Spain the Associated Press of Illinois had after a hard fight vanquished the United Press of New York.⁸ The *Plain Dealer* was an early member of the Associated Press. W. W. Armstrong had for one year acted as president of the Western Associated Press while Joseph Medill was in Europe. This organization, like the Associated Press of New York, had done valuable work in the Civil War.

The Associated Press of Illinois, successor of several sectional news-gathering organizations bearing similar names, dominant in its field after the defeat of the old United Press, was ready to do a superb job of war reporting in 1898. In the midst of the War with Spain the *Plain Dealer* announced an arrangement just made with the *New York World* which placed the entire foreign and domestic news services of the Eastern paper at the disposal of the *Plain Dealer*.⁹

This was intended, said the *Plain Dealer*, only to "reinforce the dispatches of the Associated Press with special cablegrams from all foreign points of interest in the present war." The *World* then had correspondents at Manila, with the fleets, and with General Miles and General Shafter. The result of this additional service gave the war reports of the *Plain Dealer* distinction in its field, though it was not always easy to fix the origin of important news dispatches. The line "By Associated Press" had not yet attained the magic quality it would later have.

The news of the victory at Manila was given in a "special to the Plain Dealer" under a Washington date line. News from London the next day carried the line "Copyrighted by the Associated Press." Franklin Hall, *Plain Dealer* correspondent at Columbus, covered the National Guard mobilization.

By comparison, the War with Spain was an easy one to report. The distances — except in the case of Manila — were short. There were no American reverses. Generally speaking, news-

⁸ Not to be confused with the present United Press.

⁹ Editorial, June 5, 1898.

paper readers knew each morning what happened the previous day.

From the point of view of newspaper reporting the World War of 1914-18 was the biggest event since the daily press had assumed its modern importance as purveyor of news. For Americans the remoteness of the battlefields, the perfection of censorship, the number of service men involved, the staggering total of expenditures, even the novelty of fighting for Americanism three thousand miles from America, combined to make the war a matter of unparalleled interest to every fireside.

In the nineteen years between the War with Spain and American entrance into the World War the agencies of communication had multiplied in number and ripened in efficiency. The Associated Press, as it is known today, had developed from the Illinois association after the state supreme court had made a decision in 1900 which radically undermined the purpose of the earlier organization.¹⁰ It was ready in 1914 to give the world an example of big news reporting unexcelled before or since.¹¹

Since the last war, also, the wireless and the radio had come into the service of newspapers and their correspondents. The motor car and the airplane made their own contribution to the science of speed in news-gathering.

On the other hand, of course, this war saw the art of censorship raised to new, inglorious heights. It was one thing for a correspondent to get the news of events at the front; it was often quite another and more serious matter to get the news into the home office. There was nothing the newspapers could do about it. It was merely one of the major handicaps under which the war correspondents labored.

In addition to the full Associated Press reports, the *Plain*

¹⁰ The court declared that the Associated Press of Illinois was, by the terms of the charter, a common carrier. The efficiency of the present association could not have been attained under such an interpretation. A new charter was necessary and it was obtained under New York law.

¹¹ No reference is intended here to 1940 or 1941 events in Europe or to their reporting.

Dealer had by now the leased wire service of the *New York Times*. This brought to Cleveland breakfast tables the complete reports of such experts as Carl Ackerman, Walter Duranty, Edwin L. James, Charles H. Grasty, and half a dozen others who wrote understandingly from foreign capitals and the fields of France.

At Washington the *Plain Dealer* had its own correspondent, Ben F. Allen, interpreting war news from that center of activity. From Columbus Walker S. Buel kept readers informed of Ohio defense activities and events at the state capital related to the American effort abroad.¹² J. H. Donahey, who had come to the *Plain Dealer* at the beginning of 1900 and had become outstanding among American cartoonists, added his interpretation of war developments in a daily cartoon on the first page.

Thus the *Plain Dealer* covered its fourth war. When the Armistice came it could look back on a performance capably achieved. There had been none of the guess-work of the Mexican War, none of the hit-and-miss reporting of the Civil War, much less sensationalism than was shown in the War with Spain. It was a big job adequately done.

The significant comparison is not so much between two groups of reporters, those of 1847 and those of 1917, as between the facilities for reporting which science and invention had developed in these seventy years. There was probably little difference in the men themselves. The wide world of difference was between the pony express and the wireless; between a cableless Atlantic and correspondents in hourly touch with their offices across the sea; between guessing at what happened at the front a week ago and knowing precisely what happened yesterday.

The *Plain Dealer* has lived through many an evolution in newspaper-making since Gray launched his modest bark. Many of them are reflected in the changing manners and methods of war reporting.

¹² Mr. Buel has been the *Plain Dealer's* Washington correspondent since 1919.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MIRACLE OF MACHINERY

*Giant presses whir through the night; typesetting
from a keyboard; the matrix and the tele-
type; from woodcuts to wirephotos.*

ROMANCE dwells in the press-room as well as in the editorial and business offices. The music of newspaper-making comes from typesetting machines, is heard in the tinkling of telephones and the purring of motor cars used both in the collection of news and in the distribution of the completed product.

The *Plain Dealer's* first press equipment consisted of one Washington hand press. "We commenced," wrote J. W. Gray in 1856, "with a single hand press and one swearing roller boy."¹ Press and boy were, presumably, capable of turning off not many more than a hundred copies of the 1842 *Plain Dealer* in an hour. Only a few hundred, of course, were necessary.

By 1856 Gray said his equipment had increased to four hand presses and two steam power presses, while a third press had been ordered. The *Plain Dealer* was already five years old when Richard M. Hoe invented the rotary press, to be followed soon after by the invention of the curved stereotype plate fashioned to fit the cylinder of the press. The flexible matrix, which made the curved plate possible, increased the capacity of newspaper presses a hundredfold.

¹ *Plain Dealer*, January 3.

The *Plain Dealer*, though far from the first in its local field, antedated the power press as well as the rotary press. In its earliest days it knew nothing of typesetting machines or of the stereotyping process. It did not, of course, have the help of typewriters, telegraph, or telephone.

Prior to the introduction of steam power, cylinder presses were turned by crank-men. They were known as Napier presses and were built by the Hoes. The first steam-driven press in Ohio was installed in the building of the *Cincinnati Gazette* in 1834. It did not reach Cleveland, then a much smaller community than Cincinnati, for some years after the advent of the weekly *Plain Dealer*.

By 1852 Editor Gray announced the installation of "one of Hoe's super royal jobbing presses, the only one of its kind, we think, in the west."² At the beginning of the Civil War the paper was printed on a "single cylinder steam press."³ It was this press, doubtless, that W. W. Armstrong found among the physical assets of the paper he bought four years later. It was capable of turning off 1,800 copies of the four-page paper per hour.

Thus from time to time in the succeeding years frequent announcements came of the purchase of new, better, and larger presses. Three additional three-deck presses were bought in 1899, the year following the Baker-Kennedy assumption of managerial authority under the lease. With this new equipment, it was said, the *Plain Dealer* could print 88,000 ten- or twelve-page papers an hour; 50,000 sixteen-page papers; or 38,000 twenty- or twenty-four-page papers. Circulation was then rapidly rising and the new capacity was put to good use.

The art of printing advances so rapidly that scarcely a year passes which does not call for some addition to, or replacement of, important mechanical equipment in the *Plain Dealer* plant. In the fall of 1936 the paper began the use of what its manufacturer called "the world's largest, fastest, most modern multi-

² June 21.

³ May 29, 1861.

color newspaper press.”⁴ It is used exclusively for printing the comic section and the Sunday magazine.

Between the single Washington press of 1842 and the great battery of Hoe machines of 1942 lies a typically American story of a newspaper keeping pace with its opportunity by providing for itself a mechanical plant as fine as any in the world, in order that it may the more effectively serve those who depend on it for information of a universe teeming with significant activities.

A modern metropolitan newspaper press-room is a layman's wonderland. The massiveness of its equipment and the smoothness of its operation, the nice precision which marks its every part and function, the intricacy of its fast-moving parts, each attending to its own specific tasks, the atmosphere of hurried but orderly activity which governs it all, the rapidity and volume of its production, haste without confusion, a thousand devils of power controlled by a switch — the whole constitutes a harmonious, almost poetic epitome of the new mechanical age. Mere statistics mean little and, to a layman, explain less.

In the *Plain Dealer's* great press-room now stand six giants of steel, electrically operated, whose fast-turning rollers nightly and daily turn out the *Plain Dealers*, printed and folded for delivery. Additional to the six in the press-room of the *Plain Dealer* Building is another battery of presses operating in the art-gravure building on Superior Avenue near East 18th Street, and used in connection with the art-gravure section of the Sunday *Plain Dealer*.

Two of the six in the press-room at Superior and East 6th Street are among the very latest built by R. Hoe & Company, being known as the twelve-arch type press units. The second of the two was put in operation on November 6, 1940; installation of the first had been completed in the previous August.

If figures are desired, let it be said that these latest presses have a length of nearly 100 feet, a height of about 24 feet, and weigh 500 tons. Each press is driven by a 200-horsepower mo-

⁴ November 15.

tor. These are six-unit presses, which means, in effect, that each of these mammoth presses is really six presses built into a single structure, each of the six units being operable by itself, if desired.

Three of the six presses in the *Plain Dealer* Building are five-unit instead of six-unit presses, and all they lack which their bigger brothers have — except capacity — are the refinements which have come in press building since the time of their assembling. One is used entirely for color printing. Color printing is a side-line, with each of the lesser members of the big battery of six having an extra unit usable for color only.

Leaving the one exclusively color press out of consideration, the other five are capable of running off 180,000 *Plain Dealers* per hour, as long as the number of pages per issue does not go above forty. Thus runs the story of the *Plain Dealer* as told in the press-room; from J. W. Gray's single hand press to its seven Brobdingnagian successors; from the *Plain Dealer* of 1842 to the *Plain Dealer* of 1942.

"There has been a great deal of interest in Cleveland for several years in typesetting machinery," the *Plain Dealer* remarked in the spring of 1891, "but as yet no practical results have been seen."⁵ On the next day, Sunday, the paper printed one whole page from type set by machinery, in order to give its readers a sample of what this strange new device was capable of doing.

Nine months later announcement was made that a typesetting machine had been installed among the hand-set cases in the *Plain Dealer* composing-room.⁶ It was considered enough of an innovation to justify an illustrated news article concerning it.

The *Plain Dealer* today uses thirty-seven typesetting machines, in addition to four monotypes — for making type and spacing material — and three typographs for composing display lines.

Near the end of the Civil War the *Plain Dealer* called attention to the fact that the *Cincinnati Commercial* was then being

⁵ May 23.

⁶ February 21, 1892.

printed from "stereotype plates," and described in detail what the process was.⁷ The *Sun* and other New York papers had begun using the plates several years before. Evidently they were still news in Cleveland.

Between the machine which sets type and the machine which prints the paper, on the newspaper assembly line, stands the stereotype equipment which uses the type to make the matrix and then the matrix to make the curved metal plate which the pressman attaches to the cylinder of his great machine for printing. As many as a thousand of these plates are sometimes made in a single night in the *Plain Dealer* stereotype room.

So many discoveries and inventions touching newspaper-making came so fast that either the chronology or the relative importance is difficult to fix. What would the great modern press keep itself busy with if paper still had to be made of rags? What would today's newspapers look like if photo-engraving had not come? How many men setting type by hand would be required to fill the columns of the Sunday *Plain Dealer*?

The invention of paper is supposed to have occurred near the beginning of the Christian era. As late as 1862 the *Plain Dealer* considered it news that a process had been discovered for making print paper from wood pulp.⁸ About the same time the cost of rag paper, then used by newspapers, had risen to twelve and a half cents a pound.⁹

The typesetting machine, the stereotype process, and the perfection of pulp paper manufacture, coming within a period of a few years, permitted newspapers to expand to something like their present size. Without either of the three it is a fair assumption that the twentieth-century daily and Sunday newspaper would be but a fraction of its present size.

⁷ October 24, 1864.

⁸ December 22.

⁹ *Plain Dealer*, December 26, 1862. At this price paper would have cost \$250 a ton. A recent price on wood-pulp paper, such as is used by most newspapers now, was \$50 a ton.

Old-time printers complained that setting type by machinery would deprive them of employment. Instead, the new process hastened an expansion calling for many more printers than before.

The machine which sets type speeds up the enterprise, shortening the time between the writing of a news story and its appearance in print. The stereotyper helps the speed-up by making duplicate plates of the same page, which permits the fast press to print simultaneously half a dozen first pages instead of one at a time.

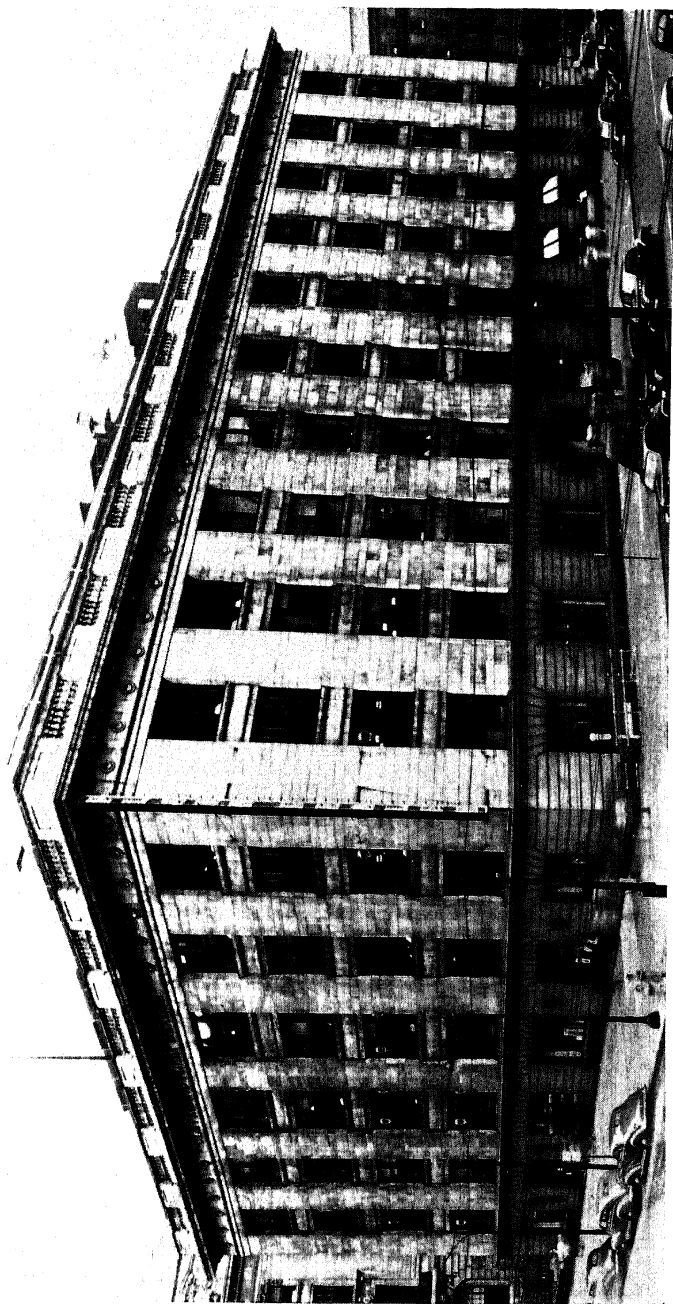
The advent of any machine which does work formerly done by hand is likely momentarily to displace some workers. In the case of the newspaper at least, the introduction of mechanical processes had the effect before long of multiplying jobs and of making large enterprises out of smaller ones.

Before the time when the first step in print-paper-making was to sharpen the woodman's ax, it was sometimes difficult to persuade people to sell their old rags to paper-makers. In an advertisement supposedly designed to encourage this useful disposal of waste material, printed in the *Virginia Gazette* in 1744, appeared this quaint stanza:

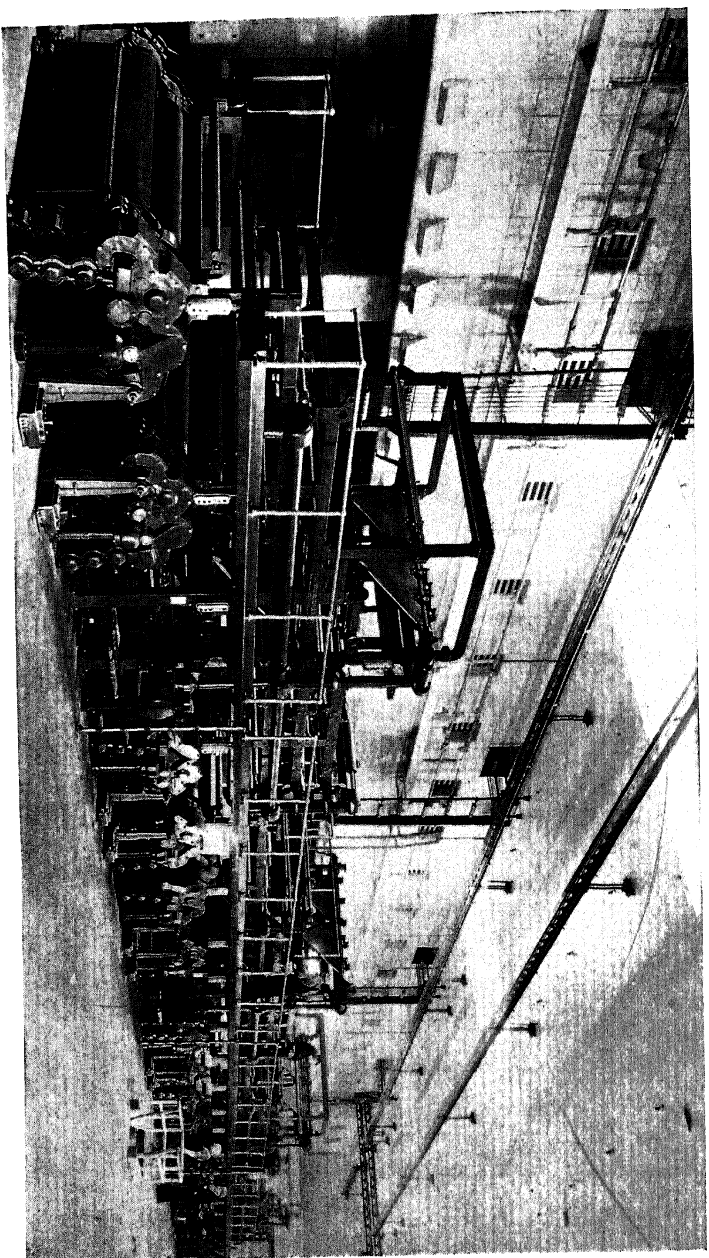
Nice Delia's smock, which, neat and whole,
No man durst finger for his soul;
Turned to Gazette, now all the Town
May take it up, or smooth it down,
Whilst Delia may with it dispense,
And no affront to Innocence!

The *Plain Dealer* pioneered in the use of illustrations in its news columns. The early cuts were, of course, line drawings and most of them were decidedly crude. In one issue in 1882 the paper devoted its entire first page to cuts of persons identified with the trial of Guiteau, the assassin of Garfield.¹⁰ There was no attempt at ornamentation or artistic lay-out. And, sad to re-

¹⁰ February 4.



THE PLAIN DEALER BUILDING
Its construction followed the fire of 1908.



PRESSES

Shown here are twelve units of Hoe superproduction, high-speed presses, used in printing the daily Plain Dealer and the news sections of the Sunday issue. Each unit is capable of printing sixteen pages. In the Plain Dealer press-room are twenty-seven such units.

late, some of the captions were mixed in the make-up, misidentifying various innocent people.

These early cuts were printed from wood blocks. Later came chalk plates, whereon the artist scratched his pictures in the chalk covering of steel plates. On the heels of the chalk came the zinc etching, still used in some branches of newspaper illustration. The *Plain Dealer's* daily cartoons, for instance, are printed from such etchings.

By the end of the century, however, photo-engraving — linking the camera to the printing press — was producing for general purposes the half-tone cut which has now practically supplanted the earlier types of newspaper illustration. The new cuts began to appear in the *Plain Dealer* early in January 1900. For a time the new and the old appeared together in the same issues of the paper, but gradually the line drawings decreased in number; the half-tones grew more numerous.

One of the first steps of plant expansion undertaken after the opening of the Baker-Kennedy regime was the establishment of complete photo-engraving facilities. It was the small beginning of what has become a department which keeps eighteen men busy and turns out an average of 1,400,000 square inches of engraving per year. This figure may be compared with the 60,000 inches produced the first year.

The introduction of photo-engraving in the process of newspaper-making was fraught with serious difficulties. It was thought at first that the new art could not be adapted to the fast rotary press. The stereotyping process had not yet developed its later efficiency, nor had the printing press. The quality of paper then used was considered a serious handicap to success. It was one of the tasks of the *Plain Dealer's* new photo-engraving plant to study how to overcome these handicaps. Its success is attested by evidence offered in every issue of the paper.

Great as was the achievement of the photo-engraving process in furnishing plates capable of being stereotyped and then printed on the modern fast press, the marvel of it is overshadowed

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owed by the wirephoto — the photograph sent by wire. Experimentation in this direction had been carried on steadily for many years when on New Year's Day 1935 the first satisfactory picture by wire was flashed by the Associated Press from New York to twenty-five receiving stations scattered across the continent.¹¹ The wirephoto was born. The camera was brought into closer partnership with the printing press.

As a member of the Associated Press the *Plain Dealer* has from the first taken full advantage of this new service for its readers. Obviously, the news picture enjoys its maximum usefulness only when it is used simultaneously with the news story it illustrates. The wirephoto and the wire news report belong together. They now appear together in every daily or Sunday issue of the *Plain Dealer*.

Indeed, so far has the process of sending pictures by wire developed that the *Plain Dealer* photographer on an important story now carries a portable machine with him which, attached to any phone, permits him to send his photograph to the home office without the slightest loss of time.

Since the day the Grays started the weekly *Plain Dealer*, compelled to depend largely on their exchanges for news outside of Cuyahoga County, with nothing faster than stagecoaches and lake vessels for communication with the world, much of man's inventive talent has been devoted to the elimination of distance.

Speed is the newspapers' god. The American people have a consuming thirst for news, and they want it fresh. Most of the inventions of the last hundred years which relate to newspaper publication have underlying them this single purpose: to hurry the process of gathering and distributing the day's news.

In these hundred years have come the railroads, the telegraph,

¹¹ This first satisfactory picture sent by wire was of a group of half-frozen survivors of an air liner which crashed in the Adirondacks. They had been found after days of frantic search in a wild country. The *Plain Dealer*, of course, printed the picture.

the telephone, the radio, the airplane, the marvelous process of sending photographs by wire, the teletype. The list does not pretend to be complete.

As familiar a thing as the typewriter plays its important part in speeding up the process of publication. The contempt which springs from familiarity is not merited here.

In the winter of 1875 a *Plain Dealer* reporter described a "wonderful machine" on exhibition at the Cleveland office of the Western Union Telegraph Company.¹² It was a "Sholes & Gladden typewriter," whose speed and ease of operation was a day's sensation. Nearly a year later the *Leader* hailed the efficiency of the "type-writing machine" which it had tested by a speed contest between an operator and a penman.¹³

Manufacture of the first practical typewriter had begun at Ilion, New York, in the fall of 1873. Christopher Latham Sholes, newspaper printer and inventor, said he believed his machine, which he called a "typewriter" after many other names had been suggested and rejected, might be popular for a time, but he feared that then it would "be thrown aside."

Wonderful as the machine was acknowledged to be, however, it was slow of general adoption in the newspaper offices of Cleveland. Well past the third decade of the new century there were still men at editorial desks turning out penciled copy which printers admitted they found more or less legible. The *Cleveland Press* claimed to be first to adopt the machine for general use, and this was about 1893. Within a few years typewriters were merrily clicking in all newspaper offices.

By the summer of 1941 the *Plain Dealer* was using 154 typewriters, scattered through all departments. The "wonderful machine" of 1875, instead of being soon "thrown aside," had become almost as much a part of newspaper production as the great presses themselves.

For the speedy gathering of local news in any community

¹² March 12.

¹³ February 18, 1876.

two particularly important factors, unknown to early *Plain Dealer* workers, must be given high rating. One is the telephone and the other the automobile. Cleveland's first telephone exchange came in 1879, and it had 76 subscribers. One of them was the *Plain Dealer*. By 1890 the number of subscribers had risen to 2,979; by the end of 1940 to 282,250.

The *Plain Dealer* alone now uses 225 telephones, operated through its own private exchange, which is connected with the Ohio Bell main exchange through 50 trunk lines. Subsidiary to the *Plain Dealer's* own private exchange are eight "interceptor boards" scattered in various departments throughout the building. These lines are open twenty-four hours a day 365 days a year, and over them pass an average of 6,000 calls a day. In addition are to be counted 50 individual lines which do not connect with the exchange. Additional, also, is an independent exchange, with three trunk lines and ten stations, serving the executive offices on the fourth floor.

Such is the lengthened shadow of Alexander Graham Bell thrown across the daily activities of a single newspaper sixty-six years after his halting demonstration at the Centennial Exposition.

The wire communication of news reports — itself a marvel in its own day — added greatly to its efficiency by joining hands with the typewriter in the interests of speed. The result was the device called the teletype, or the teletypewriter.

These machines came into limited use in 1915. Near the end of 1931 they became available on a nation-wide circuit. By this "printer service" messages typed on a machine in one office are printed almost instantaneously on machines in other offices, perhaps hundreds or thousands of miles away. The receiving machine is, in effect, an electrically operated typewriter, the impulses for its operation coming by wire from a sending station, no matter where. The copy coming from the machine is identical with that from which it is sent and has the appearance

of ordinary copy, such as a reporter pounds out to hand to the city editor.

A battery of seven of these teletype machines, owned by the Associated Press, operate nightly in the *Plain Dealer* Building and about the same number during the day at the *News*, the total output of them all going to the news desks of the morning paper. In addition, the United Press and the International News Service each has its own machines, bringing the news of the world hot from five continents. They are further evidence of the mechanical revolution which has occurred in newspaper-making since the *Plain Dealer* made its first bow to Cleveland.

As the telephone in local news reporting puts practically every family in the community as close to the city editor's elbow as his own cradle instrument, so the motor car puts wheels under the reporter and the staff photographer. The "leg man," once a favorite character with those who write of newspaper offices, has all but disappeared. A twentieth-century news-gatherer needs no legs! But he must know how to drive a car!

With a phone on his desk and an auto on call, the reporter multiplies himself in efficiency. He can cover many times as much ground in news-gathering, probably do it better, and turn his news into copy faster than before. This advantage is achieved at whatever the cost may be of telephone service and auto hire. The same situation, of course, pertains to the staff photographer, who no longer needs to depend on street cars or his own sturdy legs.

These two aids to local news reporting have come into use at a time when population and industry are decentralizing and the men and women who gather the news of their community find the field they must cover becoming ever wider.

The motor car confers a like advantage, of course, on those identified with the paper's distribution after printing. The old horse-drawn delivery truck is as obsolete as the reporter waiting for a street car. In interurban service, covering an ever

widening circulation field, the motor truck supplants the local accommodation train. The higher tempo of the motor age thus casts its influence on newspaper-making all the way from the gathering of the news to its marketing.

The flavor and essence of newspaper achievement remains, of course, as always, in the personality, the point of view, and the character of the men who control editorial and business policies. But inventive genius, working quietly in workshop and laboratory, has touched its magic wand to the process at many points. It gives the publisher new and ever more efficient tools with which to perform his task. It does not alter the character of the task itself.

CHAPTER XIV

NEW EXECUTIVES AND NEW STEPS IN EXPANSION

*Younger men in command. The radio. The Forest
City Publishing Company. The Art
Gravure Corporation of Ohio.*

THE RETIREMENT of Elbert H. Baker as general manager of the *Plain Dealer* in 1920 brought about a new situation. The ownership was, of course, unchanged.

Baker had been general manager since the beginning of 1907, when Charles E. Kennedy stepped out as a co-lessee. For nine years previous to that he had been business manager, in partnership under the lease with Kennedy, who had the title of editorial manager.

Now, in 1920, younger men came into high executive position, while Baker became president of the corporation. Erie C. Hopwood was advanced from the managing editorship to the office of editor and given a title long unused. George M. Rogers, who had come up through the ranks to become business manager under Baker, was now made general manager in succession to the man who had brought him into the organization as a youth fresh from Western Reserve University.

Liberty E. Holden had died seven years before, leaving his estate in the hands of a group of trustees who had been five in number when the trust was set up, but had before Mr. Holden's death been reduced to four by the death of his son, Albert F. Holden.¹ These four, Mrs. L. E. Holden, Guerdon S. Holden,

¹ Born December 31, 1866; died May 13, 1913.

F. H. Goff, and Benjamin P. Bole, now assumed direction of the *Plain Dealer*, as a principal asset of the Holden estate.

The terms of the trust were such that, in case of the death or disability of one or of two trustees the vacancies should not be filled, but the number must not fall below three. The death of Mr. Goff in 1923 and of Mrs. Holden in 1932 reduced the board of trustees below the specified number. The remaining two thereupon elected I. F. Freiburger, then vice president of the Cleveland Trust Company, as the third trustee, under the provisions of the Holden will. Mr. Freiburger has since become chairman of the Cleveland Trust board of directors.

This trust was set up for a twenty-five-year period following Mr. Holden's death. Upon its expiration in the summer of 1938, the estate was divided into six parts, as provided in the will. One part went to Western Reserve University. The rest of the estate went to Mr. Holden's five children, who are the present owners of the *Plain Dealer*. They are: Guerdon S. Holden of Cleveland, secretary and treasurer of the publishing company; and his four sisters, Mrs. Delia H. White and Mrs. Roberta H. Bole of Cleveland, Mrs. Gertrude H. McGinley and Mrs. Emery H. Greenough of Boston, Massachusetts.²

The five heirs decided at the expiration of their father's trust to leave the control and direction of the *Plain Dealer* in the hands of the board of trustees first established under the will. Since the summer of 1938, therefore, while the ownership of the newspaper property has rested with the heirs, the actual direction of the enterprise has been carried on by the three trustees, Benjamin P. Bole, Guerdon S. Holden, and I. F. Freiburger.

Upon the death of Erie C. Hopwood in 1928, Paul Bellamy became editor. George M. Rogers resigned as vice president and general manager near the beginning of 1933 and was succeeded by John S. McCarrens, advanced from the office of business manager. J. A. Van Buren became business manager, and at the

² Technically and legally, of course, the *Plain Dealer* is now owned by the Forest City Publishing Co. Strictly speaking, the Holden heirs own five sevenths of the *Plain Dealer* and five sevenths of the *Cleveland News*.

same time Sterling E. Graham was made advertising manager.

To succeed Bellamy as managing editor N. R. Howard was named, to be succeeded in turn by Stanley P. Barnett when Howard became editor of the *Cleveland News* in 1937.

From many sections of America and from various schools of preparation came the men who are today directing the activities of the *Plain Dealer*.

Benjamin Patterson Bole, president of the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company since 1929, was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, October 23, 1873, son of Joseph Kirkpatrick and Melinda Eliza (Patterson) Bole and grandson of Robert Alexander and Euphemia (Kirkpatrick) Bole. His grandfather came to the United States from County Down, Ireland, in 1843, and settled in Pittsburgh, where his father was secretary and later managing director of the Otis Steel Company and in 1893 organized and was president of the American Steel Casting Company (now the American Steel Foundries Company). Benjamin Bole was graduated from Adelbert College, Western Reserve University, with a Ph.B. degree in 1896 and studied law at the Franklin T. Backus Law School of the same university, receiving the LL.B. degree in 1899. He is now a trustee of both the college and the university. He was admitted to the Ohio bar and practiced in Cleveland until 1913, when he withdrew from the law to enter business pursuits. Since then he has been president of the Hollenden Hotel Company. He was vice president and member of the executive committee of the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company during 1913-29, becoming chairman of the executive committee in 1923. He was elected president of the latter corporation and chairman of the executive committee in 1929 and still holds that office. He is also a director of the Cleveland Trust Company, Pond Creek Pocahontas Company, and the Island Creek Coal Company and its subsidiaries.

Mr. Bole was a member of Troop A, Ohio National Guard, during 1896-8, and served in the Spanish-American War as sergeant major and later as sergeant in the 1st Ohio Volunteer

Cavalry. In 1917 he entered the first training camp at Fort Benjamin Harrison and was commissioned captain of cavalry in August 1917 and in the following October was transferred to the field artillery with the same rank. He was promoted to major, field artillery, in January 1918, and went overseas in June 1918 as commander of the motor battalion, 308th Ammunition Train, 158th Field Artillery Brigade. He participated with his command in the Meuse-Argonne offensive, and after the Armistice accompanied the army of occupation into Germany, where he remained until January 1919. He now holds a commission as colonel, inactive reserve, U. S. Army.

Mr. Bole is a member of the Kirtland Country, Chagrin Valley Hunt, University, and Mid-Day Clubs of Cleveland, and the Alpha Delta Phi Club, New York City. He was married at Bratenahl, Ohio, September 2, 1907, to Roberta, daughter of Liberty Emery Holden. They have one son, Benjamin Patterson Bole, Jr.

Guerdon S. Holden, secretary-treasurer of the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company, is one of the three trustees of his father's estate and a director of the corporation. He was born in Cleveland, attended the University School of Cleveland, and was graduated from Worcester (Massachusetts) Academy before entering Harvard for his college course. His connection with the *Plain Dealer* goes back to 1907.

Since 1911 Mr. Holden has been a member of the visiting committee of the geology section at Harvard. He is a trustee of the Natural History Museum of Cleveland, of the Cleveland School of Art, and of Lakeview Cemetery; and is a member of the advisory committee of the Cleveland Museum of Art.

I. F. Freiburger, one of the three trustees of the Holden estate and a director of the publishing company, was born in New York City. Following his graduation from Western Reserve University in 1901, he went to work in the estates department of the Cleveland Trust Company and has been continuously iden-

BENJAMIN P. BOLE

president of the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company, president of the Forest City Publishing Company, and a trustee of the Liberty E. Holden Estate, died suddenly on the morning of November 27, 1941, when this volume was already on the press.

Mr. Bole was a man of many civic interests and activities. He served his country in two wars. His death was a great loss not only to the *Plain Dealer* but to the community it has served for one hundred years.

tified with this bank ever since. He became assistant trust officer in 1903, trust officer in 1907, vice president in 1915, and chairman of the board of the bank in 1941.

His connection with the *Plain Dealer* dates from 1932 when he was chosen a trustee of the Holden estate after the death of Mrs. L. E. Holden.

Civic activities are an important part of Mr. Freiburger's contribution to Cleveland. He has served as president of the Chamber of Commerce, is a trustee of Cleveland College and Adelbert College and chairman of the finance committee of Mount Sinai Hospital.

John S. McCarrens, vice president and general manager, was born at Freeport, Pennsylvania, July 27, 1869. His early years were spent in the Oil City and Bradford, Pennsylvania, oil countries. He attended parochial and public schools and Niagara University. From the university he received in June 1940 the honorary degree of LL.D.

His early training was in merchandising and advertising. On coming to Cleveland in 1899 he applied himself to the study of business administration and executive management and subsequently became advertising manager of the May Company department store. In 1914 he was appointed advertising manager of the *Plain Dealer*; in 1917 he became business manager and in 1933 was made a member of the board of directors. At the same time he was made vice president and general manager. He is also president of the United Broadcasting Company and of the Art Gravure Corporation of Ohio.

Important recognition was given Mr. McCarrens as a publisher when he was elected president of the American Newspaper Publishers Association. He served in this office in 1939 and 1940.

Paul Bellamy's connection with the *Plain Dealer* dates back to 1909. Son of Edward Bellamy, famed author of *Looking Backward* and other books widely read in their day, he was

born at Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts, a small manufacturing city near Springfield. After graduation from Harvard he began newspaper work at Springfield, but severed his connection with New England a few years later to become a reporter on the *Plain Dealer*.

Except for a brief period in the publishing business in Chicago and another covering his service as an artilleryman in the World War, he has been identified continuously with the paper, which raised him to the editorship in 1928. He holds honorary degrees from Ohio Wesleyan and Oberlin.

Bellamy is a director of the Associated Press and a member of the executive committee of the board. He has been president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors and of the Cleveland City Club. He is a member of the board of directors of the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company.

Many are the *Plain Dealer* men who got their first whiff of printer's ink on a small-town newspaper. Among them is C. C. McConkie, controller of the paper since 1909 and one of its directors.

He was born at Lexington, Ohio, and was graduated from the Port Clinton high school. Taking the opportunity immediately at hand, he went to work for the *Lake Shore Bulletin*, a weekly published at Port Clinton, and stayed there seven years. However, his interest changed to business and then to public accounting. Most of his active years have been spent in the latter field. He is a member of the American Institute of Accountants, of the Ohio Society of Certified Public Accountants, and of the Controllers Institute.

The day which saw Tom L. Johnson elected for his first term as mayor of Cleveland saw William G. Vorpe taking his first assignment as a *Plain Dealer* reporter. That was the first day of April 1901. Vorpe, Sunday and feature editor since 1919, has been with the paper uninterruptedly ever since.

He was born at Kenton, Ohio, and there he began his news-



ERIE C. HOPWOOD
Editor from 1920 till his death in 1928



JAMES H. DONAHEY
James H. Donahey came as cartoonist in 1900. His career with the Plain Dealer covers more than two fifths of the paper's life.



PUMPKIN PIE
 "You're a regular old blarney!"
 Cleveland Plain Dealer, Sunday, October 8, 1911



"Noisiree, you don't catch me kicking another one!"
 Cleveland Plain Dealer, Sunday, March 10, 1912

These Donahey cartoons, picked at random, are characteristic of the work of an artist whose thinking is rooted deeply in rural Ohio.

paper work as a one-man editorial staff on the small-town daily. He worked later on the *Zanesville Courier*, and brought to the *Plain Dealer* an understanding of Ohio conditions down state which from the beginning has been one of the assets of the paper. Vorpe is an alumnus of Ohio Wesleyan University.

J. A. Van Buren, business manager of the *Plain Dealer*, came to the paper from New Orleans in 1923. His newspaper experience began with the *Times-Democrat* in that city. In 1914 this paper was consolidated with the *New Orleans Picayune* and by 1920 Van Buren was its business manager.

Three years after coming to the *Plain Dealer*, Van Buren was classified advertising manager, becoming advertising manager in 1931. He succeeded McCarrens as business manager in 1933.

Sterling E. Graham, advertising manager, came to the *Plain Dealer* in 1924 with a background of scholarship, athletic prowess, and distinguished service in France. He was graduated from the DeWitt Clinton high school in New York with the Samuels medal for the best combined record of classroom and sports achievements. This habit of acquiring honors for useful accomplishment has remained with him through the years.

He is a man of endless activities in professional and civic fields. A two-term president of the Cleveland Advertising Club, he finds time also for active membership in other organizations familiar in Cleveland for their good works.

One of the most widely known of all *Plain Dealer* men is James Harrison Donahey, cartoonist, who brought his facile pen and understanding philosophy to the paper in 1900. The work of Donahey is known wherever newspaper opinion is considered worth following.

Born at Westchester, Tuscarawas County, Ohio, he attended the public schools, took a business course, then abandoned his career as a printer to enter the Cleveland School of Art. He became a cartoonist on the old *Cleveland World* in 1896, performing his daily task in chalk plate. One of the early acts of

E. H. Baker and Charles E. Kennedy, in their move to popularize the *Plain Dealer*, was to invite Donahey over from the *World* office to draw cartoons for the morning paper.

Former Governor and former United States Senator Vic Donahey, now in retirement, is a brother of the cartoonist.

When Walker S. Buel became Washington correspondent in the fall of 1919 he succeeded to a line of distinguished newspaper men who have represented the *Plain Dealer* at the national capital through many years. He is recognized today as one of the outstanding men in the profession at Washington.

Born at Springfield, Ohio, Buel attended Buchtel College (now the University of Akron) and later Western Reserve University. He became a *Plain Dealer* reporter in 1912, head of the Columbus news bureau in 1917; two years later he succeeded the late Ben F. Allen at Washington.

The esteem in which he is held by his associates at the capital was shown when he was elected president of the Gridiron Club, widely famed organization whose dinners and programs are enjoyed by all official Washington, from the President down.

Russell Weisman, chief editorial writer, came to the *Plain Dealer* in 1920 with the background of experience as a university instructor in economics. He has been a member of the staff of the Department of Economics at Western Reserve since 1919, and is now associate professor.

He was born at Van Wert, Ohio, graduated from Reserve in 1912, and in 1917 took a master's degree at Harvard. In this same year he enlisted in the Ambulance Corps and served with the French and Italian armies in France down to the time of the Armistice. He was awarded a Croix de Guerre for conspicuous service in evacuating a post under heavy fire.

Recognition of Weisman in the field of economics was made when he became a charter member of the national committee of economists on monetary policy which was set up in part to resist the influences tending toward inflation.

Another *Plain Dealer* executive with World War experience is Stanley P. Barnett, managing editor. His first connection with the paper was as a reporter in 1920.

He was born at Danville, Indiana, and after graduation from the local high school went to De Pauw University at Greencastle, Indiana, taking his degree there in 1915. He taught school for two years, worked for the *Lorain News*, the *Richmond* (Indiana) *Item*, and the *Youngstown Telegram* before coming to the *Plain Dealer*. He went to the *Detroit News* in 1922, but returned the same year to take the *Plain Dealer* state desk. From that point his advancement in the organization has been one of steady progression.

Head of its department of drama and a popular columnist, William F. McDermott has the further distinction of being the *Plain Dealer's* most traveled employee. Drop him with a parachute in or near any large city in the world, and he will know his way to the nearest telegraph office and the most comfortable hotel, with no noticeable delay. Every year for some twenty years he visited a good part of Europe, and he has been three times round the world.

Mr. McDermott took the Edisonian route to enter newspaper work, starting his career as a telegraph operator at fifteen in a small Indiana town. He was born a Hoosier, attended Butler College at Indianapolis, and devoted most of his effort prior to his coming to the *Plain Dealer* to the task of brightening the columns of the *Indianapolis News*.

On invitation of the late Erie C. Hopwood, editor of the *Plain Dealer*, McDermott came to take the vacant desk as dramatic critic in 1922. His work has broadened with his years on the *Plain Dealer*. As a writer of travel sketches from abroad, as a columnist roaming the whole field of world events for comment and discussion, and as a dramatic critic, he has long been one of the most useful and popular of *Plain Dealer* men.

Coming to the *Plain Dealer* in 1914, Byron A. Collins has spent his whole time since in building the National Advertising Department, which he established. The department has grown from a one-man affair to an organization of a score or more employees, in addition to representatives in seven other American cities.

Mr. Collins was born at Whitney Point, New York, and was graduated from Union College. Before joining the staff of the *Plain Dealer* he spent six years at Dallas, Texas, where he was connected with the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company.

Joseph V. Madigan, circulation director both of the *Plain Dealer* and of the *Cleveland News*, was born in Cleveland and received his early education at St. Rose's Catholic School. Graduated from the Dayton Preparatory School, he attended Dayton University and Adelbert College. He is a graduate also of Cleveland Law School.

He came to the *Plain Dealer* in June 1927, doing circulation and general promotion work. In May 1930 he was appointed country circulation manager of the *Plain Dealer*. He held this position until July 1935, when he became circulation manager of the *Cleveland News*. In October 1936 he assumed the duties of circulation director of both newspapers.

Mr. Madigan has served as president of the Ohio Circulation Managers Association, and for the past three years was a director of the International Circulation Managers Association. He is still an active member of the Ohio group.

He is an enthusiast in outdoor sports, and hasn't missed a world series in many years.

Clark Bole came to the *Plain Dealer* in the spring of 1936 as credit manager and has remained at that post. He was born in Cleveland, attended the local public schools, University School, and Cornell University. Before joining the staff of the *Plain Dealer* he was connected with the Cleveland Trust Company, Hayden, Miller & Company, Cleveland brokers, the Hydraulic Steel Company, and the Cleveland Tile Company.

New executives, new times, new opportunities, invite new steps in expansion. No newspaper can stand still. One must either advance or begin to stagnate. Happily, the *Plain Dealer* has chosen to push ahead.

John J. McCarrens is manager of the classified advertising department. His connection with the *Plain Dealer* began in 1927 when he joined the circulation department. Three years later he was advanced to advertising promotion and merchandising; in 1933 to display advertising. He became assistant classified manager in 1936 and assumed his present position two years later.

Mr. McCarrens was born in Cleveland and attended Georgetown and Dayton Universities.

A step of far-reaching significance was taken by the *Plain Dealer* a dozen years ago when it entered the field of radio. The idea behind the move was that, with the fast-developing science of communication by air, even the wisest of newspaper publishers could not tell what a few years or a few decades might bring in the business of news merchandising. If radio communication were some day somehow to supplant the newspaper, a company that wished to remain in the business of news-gathering and distribution might do well to have this anchor to windward.

In pursuit of this policy the *Plain Dealer* now owns Stations WHK and WCLE in Cleveland, WHKC at Columbus, and a minority interest in WKBN at Youngstown. These stations are not operated in co-operation with the *Plain Dealer*. They are not used to promote the interests of the paper. Probably few radio listeners are aware of the ownership of these particular stations. This fact, if it is a fact, accords perfectly with the wishes of the *Plain Dealer*.

A step of quite another character in the development of *Plain Dealer* policy was taken in 1932, bringing the *Plain Dealer* and the *Cleveland News* under common ownership. The two news-

papers had long been cousins of a sort, since the morning and Sunday *Plain Dealer* sprang from the Cleveland morning and Sunday *Herald* while the ancestry of the *News* includes the *Evening Herald* as well as the *Evening Plain Dealer*.

The Forest City Publishing Company, incorporated at Columbus on the last day of September 1932, was organized to clear up a newspaper situation in Cleveland which had long given concern to men in the local publishing field. Into the hands of the new corporation was transferred all the capital stock of the *Plain Dealer* and the *News*, the one a morning and Sunday paper and the other an evening and Sunday paper. Two months later announcement was made of the *Plain Dealer's* purchase of the Sunday *News*.

The two newspapers continue as before to maintain their separate identities, policies, and managements. Each paper continues to be published in its own plant and office building as before.

Benjamin P. Bole, president of the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company, was immediately chosen president also of the Forest City Company. The first board of directors of the new company was composed of Mr. Bole, George M. Rogers, John S. McCarens, Dan R. Hanna, Jr., John A. Hadden, Guerdon S. Holden, and I. F. Freiburger.³

Of this first Forest City board, five members represented the *Plain Dealer* and two represented the *News*.

The officers and directors of the Cleveland Company, publishers of the *News*, at the time were: Dan R. Hanna, Jr., president and publisher; Marcus A. Hanna II, vice president; C. F. McCall, vice president and business manager; J. J. Levins, treasurer; and A. E. M. Bergener, managing editor.

³ On the death of Dan R. Hanna, Sr., son of United States Senator Marcus A. Hanna, in 1921, control of the *News* passed into the hands of his sons. One son, Marcus Alonzo Hanna II, died in 1936. Another son, Carl H. Hanna, is engaged in other activities. Dan R. Hanna, Jr., has been continuously identified with the publication of the *News*.



JOHN S. MCCARRENS
Vice President and General Manager of the Plain Dealer



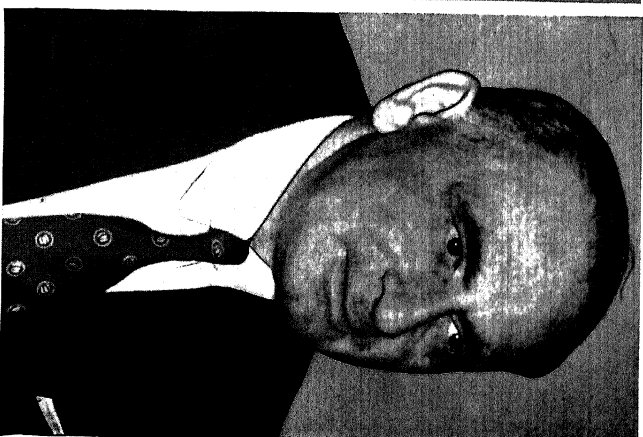
PAUL BELLAMY
Editor of the Plain Dealer



BENJAMIN P. BOLE



GUERDON S. HOLDEN



I. F. FREIBURGER

Trustees of the Liberty Emery Holden estate, which owns the Plain Dealer

Five years after the incorporation of the Forest City Publishing Company the *Plain Dealer* stepped out in another direction to strengthen its position as a metropolitan newspaper in an era which puts increasing emphasis on illustration.

The Art Gravure Corporation of Ohio was chartered under the laws of the state in 1937 and in that year was housed in a building erected for it at 1845 Superior Avenue. The *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company owns a majority interest in the enterprise.

For years before 1937 a branch of the Art Gravure Corporation of New York occupied quarters in the *Plain Dealer* Building. In it were printed the *Plain Dealer's* Sunday art-gravure section and similar parts for other newspapers. The growth of the business required more and more space, which the *Plain Dealer* Building itself could not provide.

It was decided, therefore, to organize a new corporation under Ohio laws and establish it in quarters adequate to its present needs and capable of expansion to meet future requirements. The two art-gravure concerns, that of New York and of Ohio, work in co-operation. Fred Murphy, president of the Eastern corporation, is a part owner of the Ohio concern. The Scripps-Howard newspapers also hold a minority interest in it.

The Ohio corporation, thus housed in model quarters, does printing not only for the *Plain Dealer* but also for papers in Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Toledo, Youngstown, Akron, and Minneapolis. It produces the entire edition of the *Ohio Farmer*, the *Michigan Farmer*, and the *Pennsylvania Farmer*.

The art-gravure plant itself, the only one of its kind between New York and Chicago, was built by the *Plain Dealer*.

Thus from year to year, as the field of newspaper publication widens and the public comes to expect increasingly more from those in the business of purveying intelligence, the hundred-year-old *Plain Dealer* expands its facilities to meet new opportunities. It keeps step with the higher tempo of the times.

CHAPTER XV

THE PLAIN DEALER'S MOST FAMOUS EDITORIAL

An editorial which made newspaper history. After ninety-eight years the Plain Dealer supports for president Willkie, a candidate not a Democrat.

THE MOST widely quoted editorial the *Plain Dealer* has printed in its hundred years of political observation and comment was that of August 20, 1940 declaring its support of Wendell L. Willkie, Republican candidate for president of the United States.

In a six-column spread at the top of the first page the paper announced its conviction that the welfare and safety of America would be best promoted by the defeat of the Democrat seeking a third term in the presidency. It was a dramatic declaration. It was widely acclaimed. It was widely condemned.

When the *Plain Dealer* made its first saluting bow at the beginning of 1842 John Tyler was President, the nation's first "accidental" occupant of the White House. The first Democrat to be nominated for the office after the advent of the *Plain Dealer* was James K. Polk. Though then only a weekly, the paper gave the Tennessean its cordial though unimportant support.

From that time through 1896 the *Plain Dealer* was found

every four years arguing for the election of whomever the Democratic national convention named for president. By this time the morning and Sunday *Plain Dealer* had appeared. The evening edition, under the name of the *Post*, joined the other two in support of William J. Bryan.

Two years after the first defeat of the free-silver advocate control of the paper came into the hands of Elbert H. Baker and Charles E. Kennedy under a lease, and a new point of view prevailed in the management of the property. The policy of making friends and avoiding enmities was reflected in the political attitude of the paper.

Following 1896, for three presidential campaigns the *Plain Dealer* avoided a commitment on the presidency. It was a deliberate policy. That the paper did not suffer in public esteem because of it was amply demonstrated by the record of the paper's great growth during this period. No choice was made in 1900 between McKinley and Bryan, none in 1904 between the first Roosevelt and Parker, and none in 1908 between Taft and Bryan, running the third time for the presidency.

Ohio Republicans were frankly pleased in 1900 at the studiously fair treatment their candidate for president received at the hands of the paper which had worked for his defeat four years before. The Baker policy of keeping editorial opinion out of the news columns was receiving its first big test, and readers liked it. Supporters of McKinley found their meetings fully and fairly reported, their statements of policy and fact given generous news space.

The same technique was followed four and eight years later. Taft, Ohio's President, had occasion many times to express appreciation of the friendly, helpful attitude of the *Plain Dealer*. Against powerful influences in his own party, the paper supported the administration in one instance on the issue of Canadian reciprocity.

By 1912, however, the liberalism of Woodrow Wilson won the *Plain Dealer* back to an active participation in presidential

politics. It saw in the Governor of New Jersey the apostle of a new political and economic order in the United States. To his support as candidate for president the *Plain Dealer* cordially contributed with its old-time fervor. It supported all his larger objectives, including the major one of his second term, the proposal that America become a member of the League of Nations.

The paper criticized him, however, for asking the election of a Democratic Congress in 1918. It thought his personal attendance at the Versailles Peace Conference unwise and politically dangerous.

The *Plain Dealer's* choice for president in 1920 was James M. Cox, former Democratic Governor of Ohio. The League of Nations remained the overshadowing issue of the contest. But the last hope of American membership in the League was dashed to pieces by the Harding avalanche.

With much diminished enthusiasm the *Plain Dealer* supported Davis for president in 1924, after his nomination in a convention featured by a prolonged deadlock and Newton D. Baker's eloquent appeal to the party to reaffirm its faith in the League of Nations and thus stand by the dead Wilson. With even less warmth the paper advocated the election of Alfred E. Smith four years later, criticizing the illiberality of the platform he was given to stand on.

The *Plain Dealer's* pre-convention candidate for the Democratic nomination in 1932 was Newton D. Baker, whose direction of the War Department in the Wilson Cabinet marked him as a man of rare administrative ability. Of his liberalism no question could be raised. The *Plain Dealer* had seen him grow up politically in Cleveland from the moment of his coming from Martinsburg, West Virginia; watched him as a young lawyer; approved his participation in the Johnson campaigns, his election as city solicitor and supported him as mayor for two terms; witnessed with pride his constant, expanding leadership in all progressive movements.

Had Baker permitted his friends to organize a campaign for

delegates to the Chicago convention of that year, it is easy to believe that he would have been at least a serious contender for the nomination. His high idealism as to public office, however, and perhaps considerations of health, caused him to veto such proposals. Even so, Baker had a considerable following in the convention and might have been named, except for the momentum of the Roosevelt advance.

Into the first campaign of Franklin D. Roosevelt, in spite of disappointment over the convention's failure to recognize the claims of Baker, the *Plain Dealer* threw itself with an earnestness suggestive of earlier years. It welcomed his unhesitating leadership in meeting the crisis of depression.

The second time Mr. Roosevelt ran for president the *Plain Dealer's* support of him was given with distinct and obvious reluctance. The paper was fearful of his radical policies and did not like the "brain trust" with which he had surrounded himself; it began to suspect him of being more socialistic than Democratic. It supported him in the hope that a re-election would sober his judgment and restrain his impetuosity.

How completely this hope had been shattered by 1940 is of too recent knowledge to need repeating now. The *Plain Dealer's* opposition to the President for a third term was therefore a logical step after 1936. It was logical, too, as a step in pursuance of a *Plain Dealer* policy long in the making.

At least as far back as the winter of 1898, in recommending candidates for the city council — several of them Republicans — the *Plain Dealer* urged the policy of independent voting when one's party nominates unsatisfactory candidates.¹ Later the same year:

Papers that have caught the spirit of the times, no matter whether they advocate Democratic or Republican principles, know that the success of those principles is not to be achieved by blind support of unworthy candidates, or of men who use the party name as a cover for policies repugnant to the principles of the party; nor are votes to

¹ March 27.

be won for our ticket by reckless and malicious attacks on candidates on the competing ticket. . . .²

"The Plain Dealer makes no secret of the fact that it is not a party organ," it said in 1899.³

"The old-fashioned party organ," the *Plain Dealer* insisted in 1902, "is as much out of place in modern newspaperdom as the squeaking hurdy-gurdy of a century ago would be in a modern orchestra."⁴

The *Plain Dealer's* political independence — not always, regrettably, as strictly observed in the performance as in the utterance — began, where charity is supposed to begin, at home. It led to the frequent espousal of local Republican nominees. It justified the *Plain Dealer's* bolt of the Democratic state ticket in 1899 and its helping to defeat John R. McLean for governor.

In one of the contracts between the *Plain Dealer* Publishing Company and Elbert H. Baker he bound himself to maintain the character of the publication as "an independent Democratic paper."

The will of Liberty E. Holden, who died in 1913, directed the trustees of his estate, "so far as it may seem to them wise [to] maintain the Cleveland Plain Dealer as an independent Democratic newspaper." This inhibition, wisely drawn in such terms as to give the trustees the widest possible latitude of discretion, expired with the trusteeship itself in 1938.

It is clear that, even had this condition of the Holden will been operative in 1940, it would have been possible and logical for the *Plain Dealer* to break the precedent of a century and support a Republican for president of the United States. That it would probably have done so admits of no argument.

The *Plain Dealer* supported Willkie for president because it believed the national interest called for his success. It could not have been true to itself and done otherwise.

² October 30.

³ October 11.

⁴ July 16.

Here is the editorial of August 1940, which was reprinted in scores of millions of copies and circulated by Willkie supporters in every state of the Union:

THE PLAIN DEALER SUPPORTS WILLKIE

The Plain Dealer supports Wendell L. Willkie for president of the United States.

We come to this decision with no regard either for party names or political considerations. Rather, our decision is based on the best analysis we can make of the moral problem confronting the United States of America. We have reached this conclusion, which seems inevitable to us, with the regret which decent people feel about breaking old ties.

For close to a hundred years the Plain Dealer has refrained from supporting for president any other than Democratic candidates. We say this in no spirit of apology or of boastfulness. On occasions we were probably wrong.

Now for the first time we depart from this century-old Plain Dealer tradition. We recommend the defeat of a Democrat who is seeking a third term to the presidency.

If anyone reads into this an act of desertion, we insist that the result rests on the shoulders of Mr. Roosevelt and not on ours.

The Plain Dealer chooses to remain Democratic. The Roosevelt administration, by contrast, has abandoned the Democracy of Jefferson, Jackson, Cleveland and Wilson.

The Plain Dealer elects to abide by the idea that the country should make social progress as fast as it can pay for it, whereas Mr. Roosevelt has attempted, not a liberal, but a radical goal. The only possible outcome of his policies, as we see it, is State Socialism, followed inevitably by some form of Fascism.

Under our system of government, if a sufficient majority can be obtained to amend the Constitution in a given direction, America may adopt any form of government known or to be known, by man.

But we should proceed frankly and openly to such basic changes as these and accomplish them in the democratic way, by popular majorities on candidly expressed proposals. Never should we agree, if we hope to remain democrats, to a subtle and unacknowledged transformation of our state of society.

Eight years ago we supported Franklin D. Roosevelt with boundless enthusiasm. Four years ago we supported him with some misgiv-

ings. The course of events since then, culminating in the president's ill-disguised and successful maneuver for a third term nomination, forces upon us the conviction that we can no longer support the president whom this newspaper helped twice to elect.

The Democratic national platform of 1932 was liberal, forthright and courageous. Standing on that declaration of principles Gov. Roosevelt as a candidate for president was impregnable. Had the tenets of that platform been obeyed the United States would today be in a far better situation — financially, economically, politically — than it now is.

To most Americans the history of this period is too fresh in mind to justify repeating its lessons.

Instead of establishing policies of economy in government, Mr. Roosevelt inaugurated a regime of immense and largely uncontrolled expenditure. In a period when the United States was at peace he doubled the national debt. He sponsored a program of gold purchase at inflated prices, which resulted in cornering three-quarters of the world's supply and burying it in the Kentucky hills. He subsidized the silver producers at public expense to the tune of more millions.

Contrary to experience and the lessons of economy, he used unnumbered millions in a vain effort to borrow and spend his way back to prosperity. He paid farmers for not raising crops. He killed pigs to improve the hog market. He punished business and said that he did it to help men whose welfare depends on business.

He campaigned on the class issue by denunciation of "economic royalists." He filled the ranks of his administration with radicals, leftist thinkers and social experimenters. He obtained the support of John L. Lewis by abdicating much of his authority to labor. He kept Secretary Perkins in the cabinet and remained deaf to complaints that she, Chairman Madden and many other of his appointees, were furnishing protection for radical elements on the labor front.

He tried to persuade a Congress, which proved wiser than himself, to pack the United States Supreme Court and bring it under the thumb of the executive. Stooping from his high position as president of all the people he prosecuted a countrywide "purge" of Democrats who had refused to do his bidding.

Mr. Roosevelt's culminating offense against his party, his country and the world-wide spirit of democracy stood clearly revealed in the hollow and theatrical circumstances of his third term nomination at

the Chicago convention. The talk of "drafting" the president for the run is veriest nonsense. His whole strategy for a year before the convention was to make impossible the convention's choice of any other candidate.

No other Democrat was allowed to get his head above the common level. Without declaring his candidacy, the president swept primary after primary, each victory a triumph for office holders thumbing another ride on the supposedly magical coattails. And then, having wangled the third nomination for himself, he forced a rebellious convention to name for vice president a cabinet member whom few in the convention really wanted.

The example of a president voluntarily retiring at the end of his second term was set by Washington. It was galvanized into a principle by Jefferson. It became an inviolable precedent by the wisdom of succeeding presidents. It is almost as much a part of our fundamental law as the Constitution itself.

The situation Jefferson warned his countrymen against in 1821 has now come to pass. An ambitious executive, finishing his second term and wishing another, conjures up the Old World theory that he alone in all America is capable of leadership. Mr. Roosevelt paints the portrait of The Indispensable Man, and, lo, the likeness is of himself!

These are perilous days in world history for any democracy to experiment with indispensable men. The German republic tried it. Italy tried it. Russia tried it. The pathway of government since the World War is strewn with the twisted remnants of democratic institutions wrecked by indispensable men.

Every modern dictator the world has known first persuaded his countrymen that he was indispensable to their welfare.

America cannot afford to take the risk. No man in this still free republic is so wise, so strong, so exalted in character or so finely tempered by experience that the safety of the nation requires his retention in the presidency. America is not ripe for the advent of The Indispensable Man.

These facts are set down calmly by a newspaper appreciative of the fine qualities of human sympathy and social justice which inspired the earlier days of Mr. Roosevelt's performance. These achievements are part of the permanent record of the era. They will be remembered, outlined against the dark background of economic fumbling and industrial failure.

Much of this achievement will survive, regardless of the result of

the November election. The country is committed to its perpetuation. Opposition to Mr. Roosevelt for a third term implies no repudiation of this part of his record.

* * *

Opposing the president who seeks to violate the unwritten statute against a third term is Wendell L. Willkie, nominee of the Republican convention at Philadelphia. Unknown to national politics as recently as three months ago, this lawyer and business man from Indiana has become since mid-June the hope of millions whose votes, in the good American way, make our presidents.

Willkie was the surprise nominee of an unbossed convention. He had received no primary support, and had asked for none. His nomination came as the answer to a specific, if unspoken, demand for a man particularly trained to meet the problems which will face the administration at Washington in the next four years.

These are problems of business, of organization, of harnessing the vast forces of the nation to meet the conditions of a world at war, perhaps to fight a war. These problems are too serious for endless economic experimentation; too vital to the national safety to be handled by a brain trust with leftist tendencies, or a candidate unappreciative of cost control.

The career of Willkie is typically American. From the beginning his success has been self-achieved. Born in a small town, educated in a state university, he began his professional career in a small city. From small beginnings, traveling the road common to average Americans, he has grown into the stature of successful leadership.

To a greater degree, perhaps, than ever before, the welfare of the country in the years at hand will depend on industry intelligently directed. Willkie is trained by hard knocks for his task. He has the confidence of industrial leaders. He possesses a record of fair dealing with labor.

With such a leader America can rise to the first need of the times, which is to arm itself.

But Mr. Roosevelt cannot persuade labor to efficient production. He and his advisers spent too many years helping it get more money for less work.

Mr. Roosevelt cannot expect business to co-operate with him, except under compulsion, because his studied effort has been to harry business.

Only on rare occasions in American political history have condi-

tions conspired to bring to the front a man particularly qualified to direct affairs in the crisis. Washington was, of course, a supreme example. Lincoln was one, Jackson was another.

Without suggesting similarities between men, it will seem to many that Willkie belongs in the galaxy of Americans mysteriously prepared for command in this critical period of the Republic.

By the logic of our two-party system the choice for president lies between Wendell L. Willkie and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Even had the president achieved a flawless record of administration, which we have denied, the time is now at hand when he should retire. He cannot in sincerity say that Willkie is any less qualified than himself to direct the government in the next four years.

That Mr. Roosevelt refuses to make this concession is a partial index of his character. It harmonizes with many executive acts since March, 1933. It is the trade mark of one who has come to consider himself The Indispensable Man.

* * *

The Plain Dealer makes its choice without hesitation or qualification.

We solemnly urge the people to elect Wendell L. Willkie president of the United States.

EPILOGUE

Newspaper Character, and the Plain Dealer Today

WHAT determines newspaper character? What are the qualities by which men are accustomed to judge whether one paper or another is entitled to credit for services it has rendered to society?

Like men, newspapers inevitably acquire a recognized standing in their community. Obviously, this judgment is based on conduct — conduct deliberately pursued year after year. It is determined by common observation of how a paper — or a man — acts under various sorts of circumstances; in crises, impelled by stirring occurrences, or under the dull routine of uninspiring events.

Thus, again, like an individual, a newspaper definitely earns whatever character it has. It merely wastes its time if it tries to make the community think its character is something other than what it really is. There is, indeed, no way in the world a newspaper can for long successfully practice deceit. Every issue coming from the press is a fresh revelation of truth concerning the real heart of the publication. A newspaper may, alas, misrepresent another; happily, it cannot for long misrepresent itself. It lives its life under the pitiless glare of publicity. It can command no more privacy than a town pump!

This parallel between a man and his newspaper is intriguing. It may be accepted that individuals by and large have the welfare of society and the state at heart. They differ chiefly in the

methods chosen to advance the interests of their fellows.

One person may make himself a crusader in the civic sense, noisily urging endless reforms and shouting himself red-faced in the public interest. His role is spectacular and interesting. History testifies to its usefulness.

Of comparable service to the community is the individual, man or newspaper, that follows the less dramatic course of studying issues as they arise and deliberately identifying itself with such as it considers sound and rejecting the rest. Any community affords examples of each of these types.

For a hundred years the *Plain Dealer* has followed a pretty consistent course of conduct toward public questions. It has not been radical or clamorous. Its way, deliberately chosen and pursued, has taken it along a less spectacular path — a path which, without play of spotlight or ballyhoo, leads toward the goal of social and political betterment.

This policy calls for the habitual espousal of sound causes, whether or not they happen at the moment to have a majority public opinion behind them. The constant emphasis on issues beneficial to the state has a cumulative and finally decisive effect, like the pounding of heavy guns against the fortifications of evil. In the long run it must win or society is lost.

The *Plain Dealer* has from the beginning confidently relied on a public recognition of the merit — vital to any paper — of habitually doing an efficient job of news reporting and a sincere job of news interpretation. Without excellence in these things no publication can lay claim to being a real newspaper.

Give people all the facts and one need not worry lest they make wrong or inadequate use of them. When the chief of police of Los Angeles undertook in vain a clean-up job in the California city he explained his failure by the fact that he had no *Cleveland Plain Dealer* to help him.

"Cleveland," he said, "cleaned up by putting facts in the hands of the people through an independent newspaper. When I tried to put the Cleveland plan into operation I found it was

not effective without a Cleveland Plain Dealer to publish the facts.”¹

This policy of newspaper devotion to complete fact reporting and interpretation has not, of course, meant *Plain Dealer* indifference to public wrongs which needed correction through exposure. It has done its part in applying the correctives.

Such work as that performed by William S. Couch, the *Plain Dealer's* Washington correspondent, touring the state in 1905 to expose the influences of Cincinnati's Boss Cox, and that of Correspondent Ben F. Allen in 1911 helping to fight corruption in the legislature was proof enough, if proof were needed, that the paper has been not unwilling, when the occasion arose, to extend its journalistic powers beyond mere news reporting.

More modern examples of the same alertness was the *Plain Dealer's* drive for better prison housing after the penitentiary fire in 1930; its campaign for fairer wages for women in 1933, which led to the enactment of Ohio's minimum-wage law; its exposure of election frauds in the home county; and its study of highway costs in the Davey state administration, followed by a series of articles acquainting the public with a situation which needed radical correction.

In a sense, these activities are extra-journalistic. Yet a newspaper unwilling occasionally to engage in them would merit the stigma which goes with a half-done duty.

Government is today more efficient and honest, the perils of traffic, many as they are, are fewer, fire hazards in public buildings are reduced, civic improvements are more numerous and of higher quality, dishonest men are hindered in their grasp for power, new standards of character and efficiency exist in police administration — in some part because the *Plain Dealer*, speaking for the intelligence of an industrial city and state, has through critical decades insisted on these and similar movements of reform.

¹ The chief was Major James W. Everington. His statement was printed in the *Plain Dealer* on January 5, 1929.

It has been well said that "some institutions are venerable, some are useful and one is found occasionally that is both venerable and useful. . . . When an institution is found which has both age and a career of demonstrated usefulness to its credit, one may indeed pay it high tribute."²

The *Plain Dealer* takes pride in its reputation as a dependable newspaper. It remains today, as usual, less interested in manufacturing news than in reporting fairly and fully what really happens in a distraught, distracting world.

It takes time to establish newspaper dependability. The *Plain Dealer* has taken the time to establish it.

² Newton D. Baker to the Cleveland Y.M.C.A., October 26, 1934.

PLAIN DEALER

Old Timers

Here is a list of the Plain Dealer Old Timers, as it stood at the last annual meeting in January, 1941. The figure in each case shows the number of years the individual employee had served at that time.

*F. E. HOFFMAN	52	*MRS. TILLA H. NEFF	33
*V. C. POST	50	*ALVIN SAUPE	33
*J. D. SCHLABACH	50	W. L. CHORPENING	33
A. J. CRAIG	48	FRANK C. CORNELL	33
H. D. ASHBY	45	E. A. MELCHER	33
*LOUIS RASCH	44	JOSEPH H. ZUCKER	33
MORT MOEDER	43	JOSEPH LARDIN	33
C. C. SHARPE	42	MRS. ANGIE MAXFIELD	33
A. G. CHIPCHASE	42	*W. H. KNOX	32
J. H. DONAHEY	40	IDA MARMANN	32
*CHARLES WILBUR	39	ANDREW L. KRAFFERT	32
F. F. UHL	39	R. T. F. HARDING	32
W. G. VORPE	39	*C. M. BEERER	31
E. W. INGRAHAM	38	WILLIAM SCHNURR	31
ARCHER H. SHAW	38	PAUL BELLAMY	31
FLOYD BERRY	37	E. N. MOORE	31
MARTHA L. DICKINSON	37	WILLIAM RAYNOLDS	31
WILLIAM GROB	37	H. J. MALOY	31
*H. F. HELMS	37	FLOYD EGNER	31
FRED REICHEL	37	C. C. McCONKIE	31
*H. S. FUDGE	36	E. M. ROBINSON	30
*E. S. HOUGHTON	36	V. B. GRAY	30
R. S. PIPER	36	S. G. BARRICK	30
JOHN ZIMMER	36	WILLIAM HOFFMAN	30
ALBERT POPE	35	H. J. GRAHAM	30
GUY ROCKWELL	35	ERNESTINE S. HUNT	30
E. B. BIRMINGHAM	34	CARRIE B. PETERSON	30
A. W. BROWN	34	GUERDON S. HOLDEN	30

WILLIAM C. VETTERLING	29	JOSEF K. SCHMIDT	24
BELLE BEAVIS	29	*GERTRUDE BRICK CALD-	
JOHN F. KELLER, Jr.	29	WELL	23
LOUIS BAUS	29	CARL BUNCE	23
CHARLES A. LAHM	29	CYRUS C. COVIE	23
JAMES LLEWELLYN	29	LIZZIE DRENKO	23
WALKER S. BUEL	28	JOHN ERB	23
ROBERT I. SNAJDR	28	A. E. GUHR	23
FRANK J. DODD	28	CARL P. HIMMELMAN	23
MAY PETRE	28	PETER J. HOLBURY	23
MARTIN LOWRY	28	HARLOW HOYT	23
RALPH G. EDWARDS	28	JOHN LEONARD	23
E. W. STAHR	28	O. C. NEWCOMER, Sr.	23
JOHN S. McGRATH	28	CHARLOTTE J. SAUPE	23
EDWIN T. RICE	27	JAMES P. SMITH	23
C. C. CALDWELL	27	HENRIETTA SQUIRE	23
THOMAS MURPHY	27	JOHN WAGNER	23
BYRON A. COLLINS	27	*JESSIE GLASIER NEAR	22
DAVID ROBB	27	*SUSIE VANGOR	22
P. D. MUNGER	27	THOMAS ARNOLD	22
JACK GILL	27	MARGUERITE BECKER	22
JOHN S. McCARRENS	26	HENRY C. BIBBS, Sr.	22
ANN B. CULLEN	26	S. S. CARPENTER	22
IRENE BESCH	26	CHARLES COUGHLIN	22
GEORGE V. BOLGER	26	STEVE DANKIK	22
ARTHUR O. CARNECK	26	JEAN C. DE COURVILLE	22
WILLIAM P. FISCHBACH	26	JOE HOCEVAR	22
GEORGIA L. ANDREWS	25	RICHARD JOHNSTON	22
LEO BEAUREGARD	25	GEORGE KIND	22
JOSEPH GILLOOLEY	25	C. C. KNOWLES	22
SAM KWAIT	25	JERRY KOLLAR	22
W. WARD MARSH	25	JOHN KNUTH	22
DANIEL J. GREENE	25	GEORGE R. LEPPERT	22
JOHN CATHCART	24	GOLDIE LIPMAN	22
FLORENCE A. COWLES	24	J. K. MacLACHLAN	22
A. K. GRAHAM	24	FLORENCE MANNIS	22
NOEL C. HOLMES	24	THOMAS H. MARTIN, Sr.	22
CARL L. MISSIG	24	EDITH MAXWELL SHEL-	
JOSEPH A. MOLITORS	24	DON	22
WILLIAM A. REED	24	GERALD J. MEEHAN	22
ISADORE SHEINGOLD	24	LEONARD C. MICHAELS	22

HILDA NEWMAN	22	EDWIN A. VORPE	21
LOUIS PEARLMAN	22	EUGENE J. WHITNEY	21
CHARLES J. SCHREIBER	22	JOAN YASSANYE	21
*PATRICK SHEEHAN	22	WILLIAM F. ZARBOCK	21
CHARLES WING	22	NORMAN BELLVILLE	20
*JULIA KONA	21	MARGARET CORKILL	20
*GEORGE PALMER	21	ANDREW DANK	20
BENJAMIN P. BOLE	21	RALPH J. DONALDSON	20
RALPH C. BENHAM	21	JOHN P. GANIGAN	20
HAROLD BROWN	21	EDWIN M. HOPPER	20
MERLE C. BUSIC	21	WILLIAM HINTZE	20
JAMES W. COLLINS	21	SUSIE HOMOLAK	20
WILLIAM ENGEL	21	WILLIAM KOTAB	20
WINIFRED H. GOODSSELL	21	HARRY LAURENCE	20
OLGA HEINRICH	21	LOUIS LEBOWITZ	20
H. A. HUTCHINS	21	F. E. MARKEL	20
MABEL JARVIS	21	ELIZABETH NYARY	20
L. B. JOHNSON	21	SAMUEL D. OTIS	20
JOHN LEHANE	21	WESLEY A. RENDLESHAM	20
R. L. MORRIS	21	WILLIAM H. ROSCOE	20
FRANK NOVARIO	21	O. H. SEDGWICK	20
HOWARD PAYNE	21	JOHN SIVERD	20
ARTHUR PETERMAN	21	FRANK WADOVICH	20
A. F. RESS	21	ARCHIE WARE	20
JOHN SCHUTT	21	RUSSELL WEISMAN	20
FRANK SIEMAN	21	E. S. WINPINSINGER	20
VICTOR H. SMITH	21		

*Retired

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